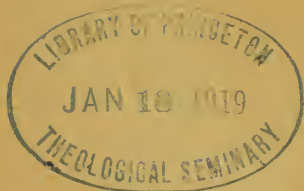


AT  
JESUS'  
FEET

R. C. MORGAN.



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Morgan, R. C.

"At Jesus' feet."







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# “AT JESUS’ FEET.”

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ON

Christian Doctrine, Life, and Work.

BY

R. C. MORGAN,

AUTHOR OF

“THE CROSS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT,” ETC.

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“MARY SAT AT JESUS’ FEET, AND HEARD HIS WORD.”

*Luke x. 39.*

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## “AT JESUS’ FEET.”



### “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED.”



“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”—EPh. i. 5, 6.

**I**T is a pleasant thing to be accepted of men. One of the blessings of Asher is that he shall be acceptable to his brethren. A thrill of joy ran through the heart of Nabal’s wife when David received her present and said, “Go up in peace to thy house ; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and accepted thy person.” And it was one of the many crowns of gladness upon the head of that man of sorrow, Mordecai, that he was “great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren.”

But acceptance with our brethren is as nought compared with being accepted of God. There will

be no stability to the favour in which we may be held by men, except it rest upon acceptance with God. It was a kingly blessing wherewith Araunah as a king did bless the king : "The Lord thy God accept thee" (2 Sam. xxiv. 23).

The blessing of Naphtali—"O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord"—precedes the acceptableness to his brethren which was promised to Asher and his tribe (Deut. xxxiii. 23, 24). The apostle observes this order—"acceptable to God, and approved of men" (Rom. xiv. 18), even as Jesus "grew in stature, and in favour with God and men."

Acceptance with God, however, has from the beginning been striven after by vain oblations. Cain sought it by bringing for an offering the fruits which he, a fallen creature, had obtained by the sweat of his brow from an earth accursed for his father's sin. And his pharisaic children from generation to generation have followed in his steps, although prophets and apostles have testified against them : "When they fast I will not hear their cry ; and when they offer burnt-offering and an oblation, I will not accept them." "Will He regard your persons ? saith the Lord of hosts. Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought ? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." "Thus have they loved to wander,

they have not refrained their feet ; therefore the Lord doth not accept them." "Woe unto them ! for they have gone in the way of Cain " (Jer. xiv. ; Mal. i. ; Jude 11).

But while his elder brother was rejected, Abel was accepted, because he came under the cover of another's blood : clothed in the spotless righteousness of the Lamb of God, whose atoning sacrifice, however dimly, he by faith foresaw, "*by faith* Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

God's true children too often fall into the way of Cain. The foolish and bewitched Galatians, having begun in the Spirit, sought to be perfected in the flesh ; and who is there whose countenance has not fallen, when unto him and unto his offering God had not respect, because he came not with it in the only name of Jesus ? From first to last, to the praise of the glory of his grace, God hath made us accepted only in the Beloved.

It is a life-long work to learn that loving lesson, that we are complete in Him ; and yet in many a similitude the Spirit speaks it to us through his Word.

God taught it in rather a humbling way to Job's three friends, when he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "Take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering ; and my servant Job shall pray for you ; *for him will I accept*: lest I deal

with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." God would not look at them as they were in themselves ; but for the sake of Job He would accept them. "He shall pray for you, and him (his person) will I accept." The friends of Jesus do not always speak of God the thing which is right, as did his elect and righteous Servant, the Perfect and Upright Man Christ Jesus, who feared God and eschewed evil ; and God the Judge of all must deal with them according to their folly, were they not accepted in the Beloved, who ever liveth to make intercession for them, and whom He will accept.

The thoughts entertained of Job by his three friends were just those of Israel toward Jesus : "We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." They thought of him somewhat as the barbarians thought of Paul, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, vengeance suffereth not to live." But God justifies and glorifies Job, giving him twice as much as he had before ; and when, convinced of their folly, Eliphaz and his companions humble themselves before Job and confess his righteousness, they lend an added lustre to his glory, and God accepts them in his servant Job, to the praise of the glory of his grace. God has justified and glorified his Son Jesus, and given him twice as much as He had before—has added to the glory

which He had with the Father before the world was, the glory due to the Faithful One, who with infinitely more truth than Job could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" and who said upon the cross, "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and there is nothing done to cause me to be silent: *but THOU art holy.*" (Ps. xxii.)

His friends were they who had continued with Him in his temptations (Luke xxii. 28), though they often doubted and misunderstood Him, and judged Him wrongfully; yea, forsook and denied Him in the hour of his need; but they *are* his friends, and when they bow before Him are they not accepted for his sake? Yea, verily. When Thomas Didymus, the double-minded and unstable man, has seen the opened side of Christ, and cried, "My Lord and my God!" the Father regards him not according to his former unbelief, but accepts him for the sake of his Beloved Son; and who shall measure the grace wherewith the God of glory graces him who worships as his Lord and God the rejected Son of his love?

Who can estimate the value in the sight of God of Peter's testimony to his Lord?—"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when He was reviled reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the

tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we were healed."

Every word was a blow in the face of his own self-love, and sprang from the recollection of his grievous fall; for guile had been found in Peter's mouth; when reviled he reviled again; when he suffered he not only threatened but used his sword, because he committed not himself to Him that judgeth righteously. The wonderful emphasis of that imperishable sentence—"who *his own self* bare *our* sins in *his own body* on the tree," has a force from Peter's lips which no other apostle could have given it; for it was written, we cannot doubt, in vivid remembrance of that night on which, after Jesus had washed Peter's feet, the self-confident disciple declared, "I will lay down *my* life for *thy* sake," and redeemed his promise by thrice denying Him before the cock crowed in the morning. Now Peter denies himself, for he has found that although he must follow Him "afterwards," his Lord must first lay down his life for Peter's sake, before the disciple can lay down his life for Him. Did the righteous Father regard Peter according to his own merit, either when he denied his Lord, or when he wrote that wonderful ascription to his praise? or does He accept him according to the excellence of Him "who *his own self* bare *our* sins in *his own body* on the tree"?

God loves to hear from human lips the praises of his Son; and the poor lost one who looks to the




bleeding Lamb, and cries, "My Lord ! my God !" —the sinner, who with oaths and curses has blasphemed the Saviour's name, but now confesses Him "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—is a monument to the praise of the glory of the Father's grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.



## “THE GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND.”

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“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”—ROM. v. 1, 2.

“HE grace wherein we stand” is the grace wherein the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath made us accepted—hath graced us—in the Beloved. Into this grace we have access by virtue of the faith through which we are justified and have peace with God. This place of favour, undeserved by us, is not earned by our holy walk and conversation, is not bestowed as the reward of our faithful service; the thief upon the cross had as free access into this grace wherein we stand, the moment he had cried, “Lord, remember me when Thou comest in thy kingdom,” as had Paul the aged when he said, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; hence-

forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

This grace wherein we stand is the grace wherein JESUS stands; the measure of our acceptance with God is the favour with which the Father of glory regards his Fellow, his Servant, his Elect, his Son, in whom his soul delighteth.

"The love wherewith He loves his Son,  
Such is his love to me."

When Joseph's father and brethren came down to Egypt, Pharaoh asked no questions as to their past history, nor even as to their present conduct. Jacob, though mourning, as many a saint may mourn, "few and evil have been the days of the years of my life ;" Reuben, unstable as water, who defiled his father's couch, and Judah, whom his brethren shall praise ; Simeon and Levi, notorious for their self-will and cruelty, and Naphtali giving goodly words ; Dan the judge, and little Benjamin their ruler—are all greeted with one common and equal welcome for Joseph's sake. Their brother had preserved the kingdom : is not that enough to ensure acceptance for all who bear his name ?

Joseph had saved Egypt, and the grateful king had set him over all the land : "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art ; thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word

shall all my people be ruled ; only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Moreover, Joseph, though innocent, had been put to shame ; and that was another reason why the good Pharaoh should give him honour. In process of time the famine in the land of Canaan brings Joseph's brethren to Egypt. They are there convinced of their sin, and say, " We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear ; therefore is this distress come upon us." But Joseph loves them ; and when Benjamin has come, " Joseph could not refrain himself, but wept aloud, so that the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard while he made himself known to his brethren. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them ; and *after that* his brethren talked with him." Oh, the joy of forgiveness and reconciliation !

Is it strange that when it was heard that Joseph's brethren were come, it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants ? Do you wonder that he bids Joseph say to them, " Take your father and your households, and come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Regard not your stuff, for all the good of the land of Egypt is yours" ? And when they have arrived, and Joseph has presented them to the king, is it not just what we expect to hear

Pharaoh say, "The land of Egypt is before thee ; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell ; in the land of Goshen let them dwell ; and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle " ?

There is, indeed, to be the recognition of those who are fit for places of responsibility ; men of activity are to bear rule : to one is entrusted five talents, to another two, to another one ; to every man according to his several ability : but as to full and perfect acceptance, all have one common standing in the beloved and faithful Joseph.

If such was the favour in which Joseph's family were regarded for Joseph's sake, what is the halo of acceptance which the Greater than Joseph casts over the people whom He sanctified by his own blood when He suffered without the gate ; whom He is not ashamed to call his brethren, because He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ; the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are enrolled in heaven ; the great congregation, of whom He says, " I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee " !

Joseph by his wisdom saved the people over whom Pharaoh reigned ; but Jesus in an infinitely higher sense saved the people of the Great King. Joseph, in time of famine, fed all who came to him with corn which he had treasured up during the seven plenteous years ; Jesus, when iniquity had come to

the full, gave his flesh for the life of the world : Himself the bread which came down from heaven, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. He "who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor," was the Poor Man, who by his wisdom saved the city ; "yet no one remembered that same poor man." "He came unto his own, and his own received Him not ; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name."

If Pharaoh bid Joseph tell his brethren, "Regard not your stuff, for all the good of the land of Egypt is yours," how much more shall the God of our Lord Jesus Christ say to as many as receive Him, and who through faith in Him "are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"—"All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." If Pharaoh says, "In the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell," how much more hath the Father of glory "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

But Joseph's brethren, after their first surprise and joy were over, might have looked back at the

days when they had hated their brother for his dreams and for his words, when they had cast him into the pit, and then sold him to the Ishmaelites; or they might have looked at themselves and be-thought them how unworthy still they were of all the kindness which had been put upon them for their brother's sake; and thus looking inward instead of outward, at themselves and not off unto Joseph, their hearts might have sunk within them, and been filled with doubt and fear lest, after all, they were not so fully accepted as Pharaoh's words had seemed to certify. Thus, in very deed, do the brethren of Jesus often deal with themselves and Him. When the joy of forgiveness has subsided, and the first love is left, then too often the faithful Apostle and High Priest of our profession is not considered, and the evil heart of unbelief departs from the living God.

If we look at ourselves we cannot but doubt the acceptance of which we feel ourselves so undeserving; and then, because our eyes are occupied with what is imperfect and unclean, instead of with the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus, the fruit we bear will be ringstraked, speckled, and spotted, like the young of Jacob's flock. Well might the blessed apostle write to the church at Ephesus before she had left her first love: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the

God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him : the eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; THAT YE MAY KNOW what is the hope of his calling ; and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."





## “LIFE ETERNAL.”

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**C**HRISTIANITY contains a creed, but a creed is not Christianity. Indeed, the term Christianity itself is neither inspired, nor divine, and gives a very inadequate if not a false idea of that which it is intended to express. The term which is used by the Spirit of truth to define what we term Christianity is ETERNAL LIFE. A Christian is not a professor of Christianity, but a possessor of eternal life. For the Fall was unto death, by sin, through Satan; and the Redemption is unto life, by righteousness, through Jesus Christ.

The life bestowed by the Redeemer infinitely transcends the life which Adam lost : it is Eternal Life. “And this is Life Eternal—that they might know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom Thou hast sent.”

Adam, even in his innocence, *knew* God very partially, and in this state of partial and imperfect knowledge he received into his soul a lie,

which not only hid God from him, but totally misrepresented God ; so that he judged his benevolent and beneficent Creator as an austere master and an unjust judge. Yet God's first utterance in the garden, after Adam's transgression, was the cry of a Father bereaved of his child. Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not ; Jacob's sorrow for Joseph ; David's lament for Absalom ; were each but a human echo of that voice of the Everlasting Father crying, " Adam, where art thou ? " The transgressor experienced that he was " naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom he had to do : " but God experienced that He had lost his child ; and henceforth the Father worketh—and the Eternal Son, having by the mystery of the holy incarnation become the Son of Man, also works, to give men power to become the sons of God. That glorious work is not so much to subdue a rebel, or recover a servant, as to seek and save a son.

If a father had lost a child, and heard, after years of sorrow for his absence, that he was in some far country, pursuing an honourable and useful career, would that content his heart ? No : he yearns to embrace his son ; to fall upon his neck and kiss him. Whether Joseph were on the throne or in the dungeon was altogether a secondary question : his father Israel does not even mention it. When he lost him, he refused to be comforted, saying, " I will go down into the

grave *unto my son, mourning.*" And when he is found he exclaims, "It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive; I will *go and see him* before I die."

The prodigal might have reformed and left the swine and the citizen whom he served; but that would not have satisfied the father, who was ever on the watch for his return. He would rather have him come home in rags, than know that he is in purple robes in the far country. And God wants not merely a righteous people in the earth; He wants the prodigal son to return to Himself. Though a son could say, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment," his father might reply, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine," and yet his heart be never stirred to give him even a kid to make merry with his friends, among whom the father had no place. But when the prodigal, having come to himself, comes back to his father and his home, the fatted calf is killed, and amid all those who make merry, the father's heart is made gladdest and merriest of all. It is this closing scene which explains the assertion in the two former parables: "There is joy in heaven, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance." When we have read the first parable—that of the prodigal son—we understand that

it is not the hosts of heaven but God, not the angels but the Father, who leads the joy over the repenting sinner—the returning child.

My Father wants ME ; "My son, give Me thy heart." Because "God *so* LOVED the world, He gave his only-begotten Son." Jesus "*loved me*, and gave Himself FOR ME." The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself *for us*, not only "that He might redeem us from all iniquity,"—that was only a means to the greater end, "to purify UNTO HIMSELF a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The good works are filthy rags, unless the people are purified and peculiar *unto Himself*. "Pure religion and undefiled *before God and the Father* is this ; to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." If it be not "before God and the Father," the religion is mere human righteousness.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt . . . . I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms . . . I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." But his people were bent to backsliding from their God. Therefore He said, "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face ; in their affliction they will seek me early." Grieved in spirit, He withdraws Himself, in order to draw the beloved one to his heart, thus answering the prayer, "Draw me ;

we will run after Thee." Even when He says, "Ephraim is joined to idols ; let him alone !" He does not purpose to abandon Ephraim : it is the goodness of God leading him to repentance, until he says, "What have I to do any more with idols ?" And when God hears Ephraim bemoaning himself thus : "Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ; turn Thou me, and I shall be turned ; *for Thou art the Lord my God !*" what is there left to the Father to reply but, "Ephraim is my dear son—a pleasant child ; for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord."

So when the soul appeals to her Bridegroom as "Thou whom my soul loveth," how can He address her in return but "O thou fairest among women"? When she says, "The voice of my Beloved ! behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills," the delight wherewith her words delight his soul issues forth in his reply, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs : let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." When, in utter self-abandonment of love, she exclaims, "I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine"—yielding all and taking all—He is overcome : "Thou art beautiful, O my love,

as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners: turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." But when (as Abraham denied Sarai, and Isaac Rebekah) she would have Him appear as her brother, and not her Husband, that she should not be despised by them that are without, his jealousy is aroused, He reminds her of the place where she was brought forth (compare Sol. Song viii. 5 with Ezek. xvi. 1—14), and demands, "Set ME as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave."

Man's lust to *know*, not God, but the means whereby he might be as God—produced his fall; and from the day that God drove out the sinful pair, lest in his blinded being man should eat of the tree of life and live for ever, it has been God's endeavour to reveal Himself to his lost child in such a way that his bright and burning holiness might not destroy the sinner. Thus it was that, descending on Mount Sinai, He clothed and concealed Himself within the thick darkness, and commanded Moses to set bounds round the mount, lest the people should break through to gaze, and many of them perish. So also He placed Moses in the cleft of the Rock, and covered him with his hand, while all his goodness passed before him, for he could not look upon his glorious face and live. So again to Elijah, standing in the entrance of the cave, He spoke not in the whirlwind, or

earthquake, or fire, but in the still small voice of love.

But even such revelations of Himself altogether failed to satisfy the affection of the eternal Father for MAN, his child. He must come nearer still ; and, therefore, when the fulness of the time was come, God "sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The veil of his flesh was so effectual that no bounds need be set to keep the people from gazing upon Emmanuel, God with us ; while also in it and by it the Father was so perfectly revealed that to his disciple, who prayed "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," He replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip ? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father ?"

His dying prayer for his beloved ones was, "I have manifested thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world : thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me ; and they have kept thy word . . . . Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am ; that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."



In his resurrection, the love of Emmanuel would not allow Him to remain unknown by those who loved Him ; therefore to the faithful woman who was first at the sepulchre He unveiled Himself, by the well-remembered tone in which He said unto her "Mary !" And by the lake of Gennesaret, He invited his disciples to "Come and dine," and none of them durst ask Him, "Who art Thou?" knowing that it was the Lord.

The good tidings of the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, priesthood, and return, of our adorable Prophet, Priest, and King, are comprehended in the wondrous words : "No man hath seen God at any time : the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And the day of earth's blessedness, when love shall bind together the whole creation in the harmony of heaven, will dawn, when the ignorance of God is past ; "when they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord ! for all shall KNOW ME from the least to the greatest. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."





## ABRAHAM AND LOT :

OR, JUSTIFICATION AND COMMUNION.

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"OTHER foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire."—1 COR. iii. 11—15.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us ; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."—1 JOHN i. 1—4.



HE ambassador for Christ beseeches sinners to be reconciled to God ; but to sinners who are reconciled, and have thereby become saints, the Holy Ghost seeks to

minister fulness of joy by leading them into communion with the Father and the Son. Not every believer is able to say, as the experience of his own heart, "Truly my fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." There is a remarkable narrative in the Old Testament which illustrates the fact that justification may consist with a very feeble measure of holiness, and that a soul may be reconciled to God and yet know little of the joy of fellowship with the Father and the Son. May the Holy Spirit enable us profitably to meditate awhile on the instructive history of Abraham and Lot, remembering that "the thing that hath been is that which shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun."

There are testing times in the history of the people of God, when He proves them, to know all that is in their heart, whether they will keep his commandments or no. Thus Israel was proved in the wilderness; Hezekiah by the visit of the princes of Babylon; and our Lord Jesus Christ by the temptation of the devil. (Deut. viii. 2; 2 Chron. xxxii. 31; Matt. iv.)

Thus also the strife which arose between the herdmen of Abraham and Lot made manifest what was in the heart of each. Abraham, walking with God, is ready to go to the right or left, and with great grace gives his younger relative his choice. Lot, whose affection was set not on things above but on things on the earth, lifted up his eyes and

beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. He asked not counsel of God ; he did not take into account that the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly ; nor did he remember that though the plain of Jordan was like the garden of the Lord, that garden had been closed to man by sin. He could not see the end from the beginning, nor did he foresee the destruction that was gathering over those fertile plains on account of the sinful cities which polluted them. Very significantly does the Holy Ghost draw aside the veil of the future, and say that “the plain of Jordan was well watered everywhere, *before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.*” He who chooses according to the sight of his eyes takes a leap in the dark, for a veil, which human wisdom cannot penetrate, hangs over the purposes of God. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them his covenant.”

Lot had put to himself the question, “Is it possible to make the best of both worlds ?” and “had given it on the whole an affirmative reply.” His method of working out the problem is full of instruction ; would God the men of this generation would take heed to it, for verily it seems as though this ancient story were written for the especial behoof of Christendom to-day.

Let us not miss the point of the instruction by

supposing that Lot was not a man of God. The word of inspiration sets that beyond a doubt, describing him as "just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." God in love rebuked him sharply, by giving him into captivity to Chedorlaomer and his confederates : but though he owed his deliverance to his uncle Abraham, toward whom he had behaved so ungenerously, he returned to Sodom ; and nothing short of absolute and irretrievable earthly ruin availed to sever the chain which bound his soul to the cities of the plain.

Lot did not at once give up the outward appearance of a pilgrim and a stranger in the world, for though he drew toward Sodom, he, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, heirs of promise, who sought a better country, still sojourned in a tent. But in heart he was no pilgrim ; he soon gave up "dwelling in tents" (Heb. xi. 9), and took a house in Sodom, and attained to magisterial eminence, for when the angels came he sat in the gate of Sodom (Gen. xiv. 12 ; xix. 1—11). Remarkably did Lot foreshow that which in later days has been thus syllogistically stated : "The evangelical form of Christian ideas—best produces that religious faith—which most efficiently sustains those virtues—which, by way of natural consequence, secure

those things—which contribute to the satisfaction and embellishment of life.”

It was not strange that Lot should succeed in Sodom. The moral power, the self-control, the upright conduct which faith in God produces, could not but secure to him the superiority over the sinners of a city given up to the abominations which polluted Sodom: and if a man now-a-day will use his Christianity for purposes of gain he will advance in the world as did his prototype; but he must expect that sooner or later God will blow upon his prosperity, that he may not be destroyed with the wicked.

Lot married his daughters probably to men of position and influence, just as many parents professing godliness do still. No matter whether they are men of God, they are wealthy and influential men of the world, and the daughter of the modern Lot vainly hopes that she will lead her Sodomitish husband to the Lord.

But Lot advances in the world at the expense of all the holy influence which he might have possessed as a man of God. He tells his sons-in-law who married his daughters, “Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city!” But he seemed like one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. And they who are intent on making the best of both worlds seem mockers still, when they exhort their fellow-men to flee from the wrath to come. “For,” the world will surely argue, “if

they believed that all these things shall be dissolved, that the days of Noah and of Lot were but feeble premonitions of the day of God, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up ; would they be as eager as ourselves in seeking to be rich, and in securing those things which contribute to the satisfaction and embellishment of life ? ”

How wide the contrast between these two men, who began their course together as pilgrims to the better land. One gains a good report through faith ; the other leaves behind him a dishonoured name. Lot is carried away captive, and owes his deliverance to Abraham. While Abraham holds fellowship with God, Lot is vexing his righteous soul from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked. Abraham is safe out of reach of the judgment which falls from heaven upon the ungodly ; but Lot has to be plucked out of the fire. To Abraham is given the child of promise when he is past age, while Lot incestuously begets children whose descendants hate and persecute the offspring of the father of the faithful, and the friend of God.

No sooner had Lot set forth on his ill-starred journey Sodom-ward, than “ the Lord said unto Abraham, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place

where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

When Lot, taken captive with the king of Sodom, has been recovered by Abraham, and the king says, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself," and Abraham replies, "I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich," God again shows his approval and re-assures him of his favour, "Fear not, Abraham, *I* am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

If those who claim to be the children of Abraham by faith had the same holy independence of man, based upon the like trust in God, Christians would not stoop to such meannesses as defrauding a Railway Company, and practically lying, by passing children of four and five as being under three, and taking half-tickets for those who are over twelve. Though the ticket-collector may not detect the fraud, God does; and if you will condescend to gain by tricks upon the world, you will never hear Him say to you, "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

But not only would not Abraham be guilty of underhand dealing toward the king of Sodom; he would not take the things he offered, and to which



he was reasonably entitled ; he would not take the smallest, meanest tittle, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, "lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich." Oh, if there were this spirit among the men of God in London, and Liverpool, and Manchester, and Glasgow, there might be fewer merchant princes in the churches ; but there would be more of the true seed of Abraham, more men after God's own heart.

The destruction of Sodom concerned Lot far more immediately than Abraham ; but to the pilgrim who sits at the door of his tent in the heat of the day, and not to the "successful merchant" who sits in the gate of Sodom, does the Lord reveal his purpose. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" says the Lord, and He remains with Abraham, while the two angels go down to Sodom. Even they were reserved, and at first refused to enter the house of Lot. How humiliating is the contrast between the dignified demeanour of Abraham toward the king of Sodom, and the appeal of Lot to the men of Sodom, "I pray you, *brethren*, do not so wickedly." And how painful the comparison between the communing of Jehovah with Abraham, and the angels' warning to Lot, "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain [the well-watered plain, the coveting of which had brought this ruin upon him] ; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."



Sarai, Abraham's wife, is transfigured into Sarah (Princess); while the wife of Lot became a pillar of salt, a beacon, to this day, on which is engraven, as with the finger of God, "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Remember Lot's wife," is echoed and re-echoed through succeeding ages, as it fell from the lips of the Son of Man in his humiliation, until at last it falls upon the ear of the generation in whose day the Son of Man shall be revealed in his glory.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The history of Abraham and Lot was surely written that we might mark the difference between a righteous man and a good man (2 Peter ii. 8; Rom. v. 7); between a vessel of wood or of earth and a vessel of gold or of silver—a vessel unto honour and a vessel unto dishonour; between one who builds on the foundation (which is Jesus Christ) wood, hay, stubble, and another who builds thereupon gold, silver, precious stones; between one who is saved so as by fire, and another to whom is ministered an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ and of God.



## MARTHA AND MARY:

OR, SERVICE AND COMMUNION.

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LUKE X. 38—42; JOHN XI. 1—46; XII. 1—9.

**I**F the contrast, divinely drawn, between Abraham, the friend of God, and just Lot, his sister's son, "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," the inspired story of Mary and her sister Martha is no less useful as affording instruction and encouragement to women professing godliness.

We are first introduced to the favoured family of Bethany by the Evangelist Luke, who records that one day, as He journeyed, Jesus came to the village where Martha lived, and that she received Him into her house. Her hospitality, however, was not accompanied by inward peace. She was cumbered about much serving; she was inwardly distracted and outwardly perturbed. Mary, her

younger sister, sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. She was taught of God that the sweetest refreshment to the soul of her Saviour was to lend a listening ear to the message of mercy with which He had come down from heaven; and, when Martha finds fault with her sister and with her Lord, Mary makes no reply, but commits herself to Him who judgeth righteously. He takes up her cause, and with a touch of infinite skill contrasts Martha's dividedness of mind, her care and trouble about many things, with the one thing which alone is needful, that good part which Mary had chosen, and which shall not be taken away from her.

A second time the Holy Spirit takes us to these sisters' home. It is a season of sorrow; their brother has been sick unto death, and Jesus, though He had received the sisters' message, had delayed to come to them. Then Lazarus died, and by the time the Lord arrived he had lain in the grave four days. Under this painful bereavement, disappointed and wondering at the tardiness with which their Friend had responded to their call; their sorrow deepened by the belief that, had Jesus been there, their young and well-loved brother had not died; the deportment of these sisters is recorded "for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."

The commencement of this narrative by John arrests our notice. Luke, who writes the Gospel of the Son of *Man*, tells how Martha, the head of

the family, received the weary Teacher into her house, and ministered unto Him. But John, who views the life of Jesus on its heavenlier side, and writes the Gospel of the Son of *God*, does not identify the family by mention of Martha's hospitality, but of Mary's love, and notes that Bethany, where Lazarus lay sick, "was the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was the Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick."

No sooner had Martha heard that Jesus was coming than she went and met Him, but Mary sat still in the house. Here is just the same difference as was seen when Jesus visited them first. It was not that Martha was constitutionally active, and Mary constitutionally lethargic; but that Martha acts according to natural, human impulse, while Mary rests under divine constraint. She had sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word. It had entered into her, and conformed her unto Him, so that she had the mind of Christ; and just as the Lord abode two days still in the same place where He was, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, so Mary sat still in the house when she heard that He was coming to them.

Martha expresses her belief that, had Jesus been there, Lazarus had not died; but she had not attained to the faith implied in the words she added, "But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt

ask of God, God will give it Thee." It sounds like an utterance at second hand. The reply of Jesus to the sisters' messenger had doubtless been reported to them : " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." These words might suggest, at least to Mary (who had communion with her Lord, and could read the thought which lay unexpressed within the words), that, when He came whom she knew to be the Resurrection and the Life, He would raise her brother from the dead. The sisters had been comforting one another, and this expectation would naturally be repeated by Martha to the Lord. But as naturally would she, with her shallow inward knowledge of Him, shrink from the consequence of her own words, when tested by the reply of Jesus, " Thy brother shall rise again." Her faith is firmly grounded on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, but she has not so learned Christ as to know HIM to be the Resurrection and the Life. And therefore, when He says, " Believest thou *this*?" she falls back upon the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and replies, " Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world." A saving faith indeed, the beginning of all true Christian life and work, but a foundation requiring to be built upon; a faith to which, with all diligence are to be added virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, love. The elders who gained

a good report through faith, saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; but Martha's timid faith shrinks from the promise even when brought very nigh, and postpones its fulfilment to the last day.

Martha was not at ease with Jesus; she did not *sit* under his shadow with *great delight*, his fruit was not *sweet* to her taste; she did not realize, as Mary did, "his banner over me is love." He was to her as a schoolmaster; and, like a child released from its lessons, she goes her way to Mary her sister secretly, saying, "The Master (literally, the *Teacher*), is come, and calleth for thee." How general is this experience! Is it not very common in these days? Nay, do not a large proportion of professing Christians fall short of even Martha's unwavering confidence in the rudiments of the faith: "Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world"? Let us not think slightly of this confession; it is the same that Peter made, and for which the Lord so highly commended him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." This is the one and only true foundation; but blessed as it is, it is only the beginning of that fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, to which we are called, and without which our joy in the Lord will not be full. Martha needed the exhortation afterwards

given to the Hebrews : "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation." But not being in communion with the thoughts of her Saviour, she felt uneasy in his presence, and went her way.

Why should she tell her sister *secretly*, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee"? Surely she felt dissatisfied with herself, and perhaps ashamed to find that there was a veil upon her heart which prevented a full and free interchange of thought between herself and Jesus. But she was conscious that Mary would understand Him; that there was a sympathy between her sister and the Lord which she did not enjoy: and, though regretful and ashamed, it was a relief that Mary should take her place.

There are some finely drawn distinctions which we do well to observe, in this sketch by the Holy Spirit of the inner life. It is said that "*Martha went and met Him*," but that Mary, "*arose quickly and came unto Him*." We go and *meet* a superior whom we respect, or a benefactor to whom we owe gratitude; but it is only those of the inner circle of his family, the wife, the children, the intimate friend, the disciple whose place is at his feet, who *come unto Him*.

Mary falls down at his feet, where she so loved to be, and uses the same words as Martha had done: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother



had not died"—words which they had doubtless often repeated to one another, while they had waited for Him, hoping against hope, as the hours of watching passed on, that He yet might come and prevent their brother's death.

But whatever were Mary's believing expectations, based upon the Lord's reply to her messenger, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," it is not for her to obtrude them upon Him. For she knows that his visit has a higher end than their comfort; that the glory of God and of his Son are to be subserved; and after the expression of her sorrow and her faith, she in patience possessed her soul.

In the silence that followed, while He beheld her, and the Jews who were with her, weeping, Jesus groaned in spirit and was troubled. His interview with Martha had produced no such effect. Her self-assertion ("But I know that even now") must, though with infinite tenderness, be checked; and her inadequate conception of Himself be met with "I AM the Resurrection and the Life." Martha had obliged Him to take the Teacher's place; but Mary's tearful faith and weeping patience touched the springs of his Divine yet human sympathy, and moving onward to the place where Lazarus lay, Jesus wept.

At his command to take away the stone, the natural and human foolishness of "Martha, the



sister of him that was dead," slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, again breaks out, and thinking of the dead Lazarus more than of the living and life-giving Christ—I AM, the Resurrection and the Life—she exclaims, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been in the grave four days." And here is to be remarked another of those expressions by which the Ready Writer enables us to read the hearts of those whose inner life is manifested by the inspired record of their outward acts. Martha is designated "the sister of the dead one," intimating that her human relationship to the brother who had died was more prominent than her relationship by faith to the Living One. She was walking according to man, by sight and not by faith, and could only be spoken unto as unto a babe in Christ: "Said I not unto thee, that *if thou wouldst believe* thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

In contrast with this, Mary is connected not with the dead brother, but with the living Lord: "Then many of the Jews which *came to Mary*, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him." Thus Mary unconsciously was the means of leading souls to the knowledge of "the True God and Eternal Life," while Martha, by reason of her little faith, was rather a barrier in their way. Nevertheless, "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

The secret of the contrast between these sisters


lay in the listening and receptive attitude of the one, and the busy bustle of the other. It is impossible to grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ unless we hear his word. It is impossible for a sinner to hear his word with the inward ear, and not be saved : "Hear, and your soul shall live." It is impossible for a saint to hear his word with the ear of the spirit, and not be sanctified : "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people and thy father's house ; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." It is the essential quality of water to quench thirst and to wash away uncleanness. It is the nature and property of the Word of God to satisfy the longing soul and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness.



## MARTHA, LAZARUS, AND MARY.

THREE PHASES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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HILE the other Evangelists describe Jesus under various aspects as a Man, John specially writes of Him as God—"the Word was God." And yet the most characteristic records of the *Man* Christ Jesus are given us by John. One day sitting weary on Jacob's well; another day writing on the ground, as if he stooped with shame for the woman brought, and for the men who brought her : how we feel when we gaze upon Him in such scenes as these, that He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, a Brother born for adversity. And can we not enter into the working of his human heart, when, with his face stedfastly set to go toward Jerusalem, whither He journeyed to eat the passover with his disciples and to *be* the Passover for them, He came six days before to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead ? By faith in God He had called Lazarus from the grave

(John xi. 41—44): by a still higher exercise of faith He would give Himself to the cross and to the grave, depending on Him who beareth Him always to raise Him also from the dead. Can we wonder that on his way to Jerusalem He tarried at Bethany, to talk with Lazarus of death and resurrection ?

“There they made Him a supper.” Happy household and happy hearts, where a supper is made for Jesus; for He says, “I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me.”

“And Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him.” Martha had long before received Him into her house, and rested her soul on Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God ; had believed on his name, and received eternal life ; had been justified freely by God’s grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and should never come into condemnation, but had passed from death unto life. Yet Martha had never in the spirit of her mind risen to the enjoyment of his word, “I call you not servants, but friends;” had not quietly sat at his feet to listen to his word ; had been rather a giver than a receiver ; had more sought to minister to Him than to receive his ministry.

Lazarus, on the other hand, sat at the table with Him; Lazarus knew the power of his resurrection. He had lain in the grave, and had come forth at his bidding; and if Martha knew Him after the

flesh, he knew Him as the mighty God who had raised him from the dead. Moreover, between Lazarus who had died and been raised again, and Jesus who was about to die and to be raised again, there was a link of fellowship and communion, so that Lazarus naturally felt that his place was at the table with Him as his companion and friend.

Martha and Lazarus are representative persons. There are many still like Martha, whose faith has never attained to the realization of the friendship of Jesus. Cumbered with serving, yet lacking the reverence due to Him (Luke x. 40), they are never at rest, never satisfied either with themselves, with others, or with Him. One of the great blessings wherewith God has blessed his people during the past few years has been that many have been led out of the Martha condition into that of Lazarus. The truth of the Epistle to the Ephesians has been opened to their souls, and they who were once cumbered about much serving have realized that "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith He loved us, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and now, instead of being careful and troubled about many things, and cumbered about much serving, they sit at the table with Him.

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spike-nard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus,

and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." A great result has been gained, as we have said, in enabling believers to enjoy their privileges—to give up thinking of themselves as hired servants, and to take their place at the Father's table, clad with the best robe, and graced with the pledges of his everlasting love. There is, however, a still nobler condition of Christian life. It is salvation "to know Him," as Martha did, as the Son of the living God; it is joy to know "the power of his resurrection," like Lazarus; but "the fellowship of his sufferings," which Mary knew, and for which Paul counted all things loss, is a state of even higher blessing. Should it not be an object of earnest solicitude, that all they who have learned with Lazarus the power of the Lord's resurrection may go on to apprehend the fellowship of his sufferings? Mary, in the early days of his ministry, had chosen "that good part" of sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear his word. Now, once more at his feet, she is enabled to impart joy to the weary spirit of her Lord. "When the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

Neither Martha by her diligence in service, nor Lazarus by his enjoyment of privilege, provokes the scorn of men; but the silent disciple, who humbly sits with Mary to hear the words of Jesus, may expect to share with Him the rebuke of those busy in external service, "Dost Thou not care that

my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me,"—and the jealous murmurs of hypocritical professors, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" This is "the higher Christian life," too calm for the activity of nature, too simple for the wisdom of this world; but that which best commends the gospel of Jesus Christ, and which receives his commendation, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her." God grant fruit that may abound to his glory, in Christians whose work shall be protected against all assaults by Jesus' word, "Let her alone. Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work on Me." Let the precious ointment of the heart's best affections be poured out upon his meanest members, and that which is our glory be freely used for his least honoured service.



## “ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.”

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“**I** AM full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me. I will speak that I may breathe.” So says Elihu, suffocating with suppressed desire to speak on behalf of God. In like manner does Jeremiah cry, “My bowels, my bowels ! I am pained at my very heart ; my heart maketh a noise in me ; I cannot hold my peace ; because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war !” “Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” “The word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily ; then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”

The words which Elihu travailed to utter were intended to justify the ways of God to men. He



had accustomed himself to "stand still and consider the wondrous works of God." He had a distant view, through the marvels of creation, into the mystery of redemption, and caught a glimpse of the Messenger who was with God, the Interpreter, One among a thousand, who, in the fulness of time, should reveal the Father, and show unto man God's righteousness.

Jeremiah, a man of a quiet spirit, tender and even timid as a woman, by a touch of the Lord's hand was made a defenced city and an iron pillar and brazen walls, against the kings and princes and priests and people of the whole land. He, with all his brethren the prophets, testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow; but they did not comprehend the grace they prophesied. They saw only through a glass darkly the dawning of the coming day. They inquired and searched diligently what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, but all they learned was that the grace should come to *us*—"that not unto themselves, but unto *us*, they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel unto us with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

And yet, with such a dim and distant view of the mystery of God, they cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered of the words which inwardly consumed them while they remained untold. Can

it be that the grace they prophesied has in very deed come to us? that Christ has really suffered and entered into his glory? that the Spirit has verily been given forth from God, as He had not been, and could not be, until Jesus had been glorified? And has He, in this last day, this great day of the feast, really spoken of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, such words as these: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"? Is there not some "dispensational" mistake? Were not they of old in the light, and are not we in the darkness? For where are the rivers of living water? Where are the *believers* from whom they flow? Well may the Lord exclaim, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Is not this the difference between us and them of old,—that we do not thirst as they did; that we do not inquire and search *diligently* as they; that, in a word, we in this gospel day, when so much that they prophesied has come to pass, are not worthy to be called *believers*, in comparison with those who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"?

O JESUS, how have we grieved and vexed thy Holy Spirit, and limited the Holy One of Israel;

How have we disbelieved that Thou gavest thyself for us, that Thou mightest redeem us from *all* iniquity, and purify unto thyself a peculiar people *zealous* of good works : a people whom the zeal of thy house hath eaten up ; in whom thy living Spirit should be a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and forth from whom it should flow in rivers !

"Spring up, O well !" "That is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water." God gives them water, but not without their being labourers together with Him : "The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." The Holy Spirit is the Well of living water which God hath given us, but the well must be digged with the staves of faith and meditation and praise and prayer, and they who dig are princes and nobles of the people. Woe to us, that we are not princes and nobles, but only common people.

Have we not held and preached a partial gospel ? When with exceeding emphasis we have impressed upon inquirers that, "He that believeth *hath* everlasting life," have we remembered, for ourselves and them, the words of the Lord Jesus which immediately follow : "I am that *Bread* of life" ? And have we understood the meaning of his command to the father and mother of the maiden whom He raised to life, that something should be given her

to eat? For, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Have we, earnestly comparing spiritual things with spiritual, united together the declaration, "He that *believeth on Me* hath everlasting life," with that which follows, "Whoso *eateth my flesh* and *drinketh my blood* hath eternal life;" and drawn the inevitable conclusion, that unless we thus live by Him, we are only such believers as those who, in the feast-day, believed on his name when they saw the miracles which He did, but to whom He did not commit Himself, and who went back and walked no more with Him, saying, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" because He said, "He that *eateth Me* even *he* shall *live* by Me"? (John vi. 47-66; ii. 23—25).

When exulting that "we are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power," has our joy been intensified by the consideration which the Holy Ghost has annexed thereto: "In whom also ye are *circumcised* with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ"? And have we delighted in that other aspect of the same completeness described at the close of the same Epistle, where "Epaphras, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may *stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*"? (Col. ii. 10, 11; iv. 12).

While gladly hearing and zealously teaching that we are "risen with Christ," have we equally hung upon the Spirit to hear the exhortation which, in the same breath, He makes consequent upon that resurrection, "*Seek* those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. *Set* your affection (*set your mind*) on things above, not on things on the earth ; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" ?

Dear children of God, does not one great secret of our leanness lie here : we do not remember that while God gives the water, we must *dig* the well ; that while God hath raised us up with Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, He will have us *seek* those things which are above in Him ? For only he that asketh receiveth ; only he that seeketh findeth ; only to him that knocketh shall it be opened.

"*One thing*," says the Psalmist, "have I desired of the Lord ; that will I *seek* after : That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended ; but," echoes back the apostle, ages after David had fallen on sleep, "this *one thing* I do : forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And the Lord marked his approval of such resolve

when He said, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things ; but *one thing* is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” For Mary, although the younger sister, on whom devolved the household service, had been constrained to leave her sister, and sit at the feet of Him who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. She brought her empty vessel to the Fountain of living waters, and heard his word. The Spirit does not say “his words,” for his word is one. She would not be distracted, nor careful, nor cumbered about many things, however long she listened ; for as the fountain has but one water, though it fill a thousand vessels ; as the Spirit is one, though He dwells, as in a temple, in every believing soul : so is the word of Jesus, like Himself, one living and eternal Word. None minister to Him like Mary, for He was the true Elihu : “I will speak, that I may breathe.” Like Eliezer, He would not eat until He had told his errand. Mary laid no hand of unbelief upon his lips, but listened and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. For she had heard in the secret of her soul his loving invitation : “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house ; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty ; for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.”

O God, the Father of our spirits ; O Jesus, Son of God, our great High Priest ; O Holy Ghost, the Comforter, proceeding from the Father and the Son : constrain our will to *choose* that one thing which alone is needful ; that good part which shall not be taken from us.

" To Thee, O dear, dear Saviour !

My spirit turns for rest,  
My peace is in thy favour,  
My pillow on thy breast.

" Oh for a heart to love Thee

More truly as I ought,  
And nothing place above Thee,  
In deed, or word, or thought.

" Oh, for that choicest blessing

Of living in thy love,  
And thus on earth possessing  
The peace of heaven above."





## THE TRUE PRIESTHOOD.

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“Melchisedec, of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when, for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”—HEB. v. 10—14.

**P**ERHAPS, of all the offices which our Lord Jesus fulfils to men, there is none more prominently set forth or more fully described in Scripture than that of his priesthood; and yet there is none concerning which the people of God are less instructed, nor which is less frequently pressed upon their attention by those who are called to preach and teach the Word of God.

This lack of intelligence is not, however, peculiar to modern times, for the verses above quoted show that, when the Apostle approached



this subject, of which he was himself so full, his pregnant words were hard of utterance to the dull ears of the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote.

It is not only a question of deepest interest but of gravest import, why this subject was then, why it is now, so difficult of explanation. The inspired writer states the cause in the same sentence in which he affirms the fact. They were unskilful in the word of *righteousness*—their spiritual senses were not used and exercised to distinguish between good and evil.

The office of the high priest had especial reference to holiness. Aaron wore upon his forehead a plate of pure gold engraven with the words, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." Only in holiness could they be accepted; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." "The whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy: behold, this is the law of the house."

The people whom God hath redeemed have always been liable to the error of regarding their own salvation, rather than God's glory, as the

great end of redemption. Israel boasted of being God's elect, but they made the word of God of none effect by their own traditions; and the words of the Apostle concerning the present dispensation have an almost universal application: "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." The self-worship, which constitutes the fall, leads us to forget that "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us *from all iniquity*, and purify *unto Himself* a peculiar people, zealous of good works." So long as we regard our justification as the end, instead of the means to the end, which God has in view, viz., our sanctification—so long will the priesthood of Jesus, the Son of God, be a subject beyond our spiritual capacity.

But we never can altogether divest our consciences of the claims of God: and because men desire, on the one hand, to enjoy the world and to live according to their carnal nature, and, on the other hand, to stand well with God and to escape the penalty of such a life, therefore it is that the false assumptions of a human priesthood have such success.

They who hunger and thirst after righteousness; who seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness; who are, or endeavour to be, skilful in the word of righteousness; who are bent upon attaining a righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, as far

as the righteousness of God exceeds their own—they, and only they, can understand the priesthood of Melchisedec, who is “*first* by interpretation King of Righteousness, and *after that* also King of Salem, which is King of Peace.”

Men seek peace, but not by righteousness ; but God will give peace in no other way. “The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, *by righteousness.*” An earthly priesthood cries, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace ; and the people love to have it so because the human heart hates righteousness.

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us *go on unto perfection.*” Until he has stirred them from their slothful stillness, to be diligent followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, the Apostle cannot enter upon his theme concerning Jesus, the Forerunner, who has for us entered within the veil, having been “made a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

The relation of the believer to his Lord is, in the New Testament Epistles, looked at from different points of view, and therefore is variously described.

In the Romans, he is regarded as having been crucified, buried, and raised with Christ ; as dead to the law, and married to Him who has been raised from the dead ; and therefore, as no longer in the flesh. In accordance with this, the Epistle

to the Corinthians views him as a new creation in Christ Jesus, knowing no man, not even Christ, according to the flesh, but as having passed into another sphere of being, viz., life in resurrection. The Epistle to the Galatians treats of the Christian as being crucified to the world and the world to him ; of him as living not his own life here on earth, but a life by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. In the Ephesians he is viewed as already seated in heavenly places in Christ, and engaged in conflict, not with foes of flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in heavenly places. And the Colossians are exhorted, as those who have died, and whose life is hid with Christ in God, to set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Peter, and James, and John, on the other hand, confine themselves to the view of the saints as yet in the body ; as strangers and pilgrims sojourning in fear upon the earth ; as scattered abroad and suffering tribulation ; as sons of God, indeed, but waiting to be made like the Saviour when we shall see Him as He is. The Epistle to the Hebrews, in unison with this latter view, while addressing them as holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, whom the incarnate God, crucified and risen, is not ashamed to call his brethren, does not regard them as being already raised up and seated in heavenly places, but as pilgrims and sojourners in the world, having left the land of their nativity,

and journeying to a better, even a heavenly country, where God hath prepared for them a city. They are not spoken of as being with Christ in heaven, but as still on earth, bearing his reproach, while He, as their Forerunner, has ascended and entered within the veil.

This separation between the saints and their Saviour, involving, as it does, their liability to sin (1 John i. 6—ii. 2), leads John to remind his little children, exposed to the temptations of the wilderness, of their Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and affords the writer to the Hebrews an opportunity to dwell upon and to expound the relation which Jesus, the Son of God, bears to his people as their glorified High Priest. For the Priesthood like the Mediatorship of Christ, presupposes a distance, a veil, a separation, between God and men; He who is at once Son of God and Son of Man, being the Daysman, the Mediator, the Intercessor, who lays his hand upon them both.

It must not be supposed, however, that the office of Mediator is identical with that of Priest. These offices, under the old covenant, were vested in two distinct persons: Moses was the mediator, Aaron the priest; and although under the New Covenant they are filled by one Man, Jesus Christ, yet are the offices no less distinct under the later than under the former dispensation.

As Mediator, Christ came down from God to

men ; as High Priest, He ascended from believing men to God. As Mediator, He came to suffer, that by the blood of his cross He might reconcile the rebellious world to God ; as High Priest He entered into the Holiest by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption, now to appear in the presence of God for us, who *have been* reconciled to God. As Mediator He became poor ; humbled Himself ; took the form of a servant ; was made to be sin for us, though He knew no sin ; became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But as High Priest He was glorified by Him who said, "Thou art my Son ; to-day have I begotten Thee [on this day of thy resurrection have I begotten Thee from the dead] ; Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Compare Psa. ii. 7 ; Acts xiii. 33 ; Heb. v. 5, 6.)

It would be too much to say that Jesus was not a Priest while on earth, or before his resurrection, because as a Priest He offered up Himself (Heb. x. 12) ; but that was priesthood after the order of Aaron. He could not be a Priest after the order of Melchisedec until He had been raised from the dead, for He had not brought in everlasting righteousness until his obedience unto death was consummated on the cross, and therefore could not be, until his resurrection, Melchisedec, King of Righteousness, and King of Salem, which is King of Peace. "Though He was the Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He

suffered, and being perfected He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

Melchisedec offered no sacrifice when he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings ; he brought forth bread and wine, and blessed him. The true Melchisedec is not a sacrificing Priest ; his ministry is the result of an all-sufficient sacrifice once offered. He brings forth bread and wine, and blesses his people, saying, "Take, eat ; this is my body." "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever ; and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

To all mankind God sends his Son as the one Mediator between God and men ; but the unbelieving world has no part nor lot in the High Priesthood of the Son of God. If rejected as Mediator, He cannot be known as Priest ; if refused in his humiliation, He cannot be apprehended in his glory. They alone who have yielded to the entreaties of God in Christ, "Be ye reconciled to God," can claim to be partakers in the priestly



intercession of his Son. "I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me ; for they are thine. And all mine are thine and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them."

The necessity of a Priesthood between God and his people, while in the body, exposed to temptation and liable to sin, is witnessed by the fact that no sooner was the first covenant promulgated than God consecrated a family and set apart a tribe to constitute a priesthood to minister between them and Him. But Aaron's priesthood, like everything else under that typical dispensation, was only a shadow of good things to come ; the body is of Christ. It was because God was holy and the people sinners, that a priesthood was ordained to offer sacrifices, and by that blood to draw nigh on their behalf to God. But the fuller revelation of the gospel does but still more make manifest the distance between the holy God and sinful men ; and as his people, under the New Covenant, are called to worship Him in spirit and in truth—not in the copies of things in heaven, but in the heavenly things themselves—it becomes necessary that a priesthood should be provided as far transcending that of Levi as the heavenly realities exceed in glory the earthly copies which Moses made of them after they had been shown him on the mount. This need has been met in Jesus the Son of God, who has entered not into



the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

And this leads us again to remark, that the great purpose of the Word of God is the sanctification of his people: "Sanctify them by thy truth, thy Word is truth." "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." The latest revelations contained in that Word set forth the Church of God under two distinct aspects and relations: one as dead and risen with Christ, and as already seated with Him in the heavens; the other, as still on earth engaged in conflict with spiritual foes, encompassed by a vile body of sin and death; and separated from Christ by the veil within which He has entered. If the latter view seem less encouraging than the former, let us remember that with it is associated the most comforting truth of his human experience of temptation and suffering; his brotherly sympathy with our infirmities; and his never-failing intercession for us. These two lines of truth, like the twin pillars of Solomon's temple, are of equal importance, and it is not possible for a symmetrical Christian life to be built up on either pillar alone. That we are crucified, dead, buried, risen, glorified together with Christ—that is, our Jachin, our establishment in the grace of God. That we have a Great

High Priest, called of God ; who has suffered, being tempted, and has overcome ; who, as our Forerunner, has passed within the veil, and ever liveth to make intercession for us—that is, our Boaz, the strength of our daily life.

“ A good High Priest is come,  
Supplying Aaron’s place,  
And taking up his room,  
Dispensing life and grace.  
The law by Aaron’s priesthood came,  
But grace and truth by Jesus’ name.

“ He dies, but lives again,  
And by the altar stands ;  
There shows how He was slain,  
Opening his pierced hands.  
Our Priest abides, and pleads our cause  
Transgressors of his righteous laws.

“ I other priests disclaim,  
Their laws and offerings too :  
None but the bleeding Lamb  
The mighty work can do :  
He shall have all the praise, for He  
Hath loved and lived and died for me ”



## “SO GREAT SALVATION.”

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“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”—Heb. vii. 23—25.

**S**ALVATION is threefold. A drowning man is saved as soon as he is lifted into the boat; he is being saved while the boat is rowed to shore; his rescue is accomplished when he treads on the solid ground. Our souls are saved the moment we believe in Jesus Christ and Him crucified; we are being saved all the while from conversion to glorification; and our salvation will be completed when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and we appear with Him in glory. By the blood of the Mediator shed upon the cross we are saved from the guilt and punishment of sin; by his unceasing intercession, our great High Priest, who makes reconciliation for the sins of his people, is able also to save to the uttermost from sin all those

his people who come unto God by Him ; and when He rises up from his Father's right hand to take his own great power and reign, He will appear the second time, without sin, for the salvation of those who wait for Him.

Thus our Lord Jesus, in his threefold character of Mediator, High Priest, and King, is related to the threefold salvation, past, present, and future, which the gospel of the grace of God includes. As Mediator He came down from God to man, commanding all men to repent and believe the gospel ; for it pleased the Father, making peace by the blood of his Son upon the cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. As High Priest He ascends from reconciled men to God, to be the children's Advocate with the Father if they sin, and to save them from sin even to the uttermost. His high-priesthood begins after his mediatorial work is completed, for He is Melchizedek, King of Righteousness, and therefore also King of Peace, by virtue of his death and resurrection. But the honour of an everlasting priesthood is not the only dignity with which the Father crowns the First-begotten from the dead. He has anointed Him his King upon his holy hill of Zion ; and upon the Mount Zion his redeemed people, who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, shall appear as partakers of his glory.

The first and third phases of salvation — the

instant salvation of the sinner who believes in Jesus, as illustrated by the jailer at Philippi, and the penitent thief on the cross; and the salvation when He shall appear the second time, which day by day grows nearer than when we first believed—have much occupied the attention of the revived people of God during the past few years. And, in accordance with this, Christ the crucified Mediator on the one hand, and Christ the coming King on the other, have been the aspects under which He has been most frequently set forth.

But the intermediate phase of salvation, viz., salvation from sin, has been very much overlooked; and the office of Christ in special relation to this, as High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people, and to save them to the uttermost from sin, has been almost entirely neglected. Some of the evil results have been—a lack of inward and experimental religion on the part of evangelical Christians; consequent ignorance of Jesus, the Son of God, in his relation of High Priest; and, side by side with this, the growth of ritualism and priestcraft.

It is our joy to believe, however, that many of the children of God, finding that they cannot live on the past or the future without the present salvation, are earnestly seeking to know their Lord as a Saviour from sin, and are realizing that, having a High Priest over the house of God, it is

their privilege to draw nigh to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water; to be undefiled in the way, to do no iniquity, but to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless; to enjoy the promises of the New Covenant, which in Jesus Christ are yea, and in Him amen, to the glory of God by us; for "after that He had said, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; then He said, And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

There are some passages of Scripture which, at first sight, appear so appropriate to the unsaved, that Christians, for the most part, appear not to discern their value to themselves, to whom indeed they properly belong. How often do we hear the gospel preached from the words, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." The "uttermost" is explained as the farthest distance from God, the deepest depth of sin; and most truly is it declared that Christ is able to save therefrom. But without discussing the propriety of selecting texts apart from their contexts, and thus robbing them of their true signification (a practice far more mischievous than some suppose), let us prayerfully consider the statement now before us.

The apostle is writing to believers whose work of faith and labour of love God would not be un-

righteous to forget. With much solicitude he unfolds to their minds the glories of Jesus their High Priest, and assures their hearts of his power to save them that come unto God by Him as their High Priest. For the argument is, that while the priests of old were dying men, this Priest after the order of Melchisedec, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood—a priesthood which passeth not from one to another (margin). He is therefore able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him; for this untransferable priesthood has but one object—"seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Manifestly the salvation here spoken of is not of sinners from hell, but of saints from sin. For who are they for whom the High Priest ever liveth to make intercession? Are they not the Israel of God? "And thou shalt make the breast plate of judgment with cunning work; ... and thou shalt set in it settings of stones; ... and the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; ... and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." The priesthood of Jesus is exercised alone on behalf of those who through faith have "kept the passover and the sprinkling of the blood." "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me, for they are thine."



Of this continual salvation the Holy Ghost testifies by the same apostle at another time, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be *saved* by his *life*"—"seeing He *ever liveth* to make intercession for us." "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for He shall *save* his people *from their sins*." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Here is another text of whose blessing Christians too often deprive themselves. "How shall we escape" from temptation and sin, from rebuke and chastening, from the fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries, if we neglect so great a salvation, and sin willingly after we have received the knowledge of the truth, tread under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified a common thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace?

Why is it "so great a salvation"? Not alone because it snatches the brand from the burning, but because, though the brand be sapless and charred and dead, it grafts it into the Living Vine, to draw sap from the eternal Root of "the Tree of



Life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Is not this a great salvation? The brand might be snatched from the burning, saved from hell, yet left still a lifeless brand. But the great salvation converts the brand into a branch of the true Vine, to abide in Him, and to bring forth much fruit.

The great salvation was *procured* once for ever on Calvary, by the *shedding* of the blood of the Man Christ Jesus, who was qualified to be the Mediator of the New Covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant; it is *maintained* by the unceasing ministry of our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, by the *sprinkling* of whose blood our hearts are purged from an evil conscience, and our service rendered acceptable to God.

Thus the priesthood of Jesus has a twofold efficacy—He is able to save us to the uttermost from sin; but if any one sin, He is our Advocate with the Father, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

The beloved apostle declared to the saints of God that which he had seen and handled of the Word of Life, that we also might have fellowship with the Father and the Son, adding, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. . . . My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Nothing mars

our joy but sin; nothing dishonours God but sin. It is therefore of infinite consequence that in seeking to be saved from sin we should employ the means provided for us by our Father in heaven, and search his Word to know in what relation He who mediates the New Covenant stands to us with reference to the paramount necessity of being saved from sin.

Having come from heaven to earth, and taken upon Him the likeness of our sinful flesh in order that He might be what Job demanded—a daysman between us and God, to lay his hand upon us both—He has gone up from earth to heaven in his glorified resurrection body, to plead our cause and defend us from the accuser of the brethren. And seeing that when the Father, according to the working of his mighty power, raised Him from the dead, and said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," He then also put this glorious honour upon Him, that He should be a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, it is evident that every other provision for our salvation from sin must be in connection with the priestly ministry of Jesus the Son of God.

If we are to abide in Him the true Vine, and bring forth much fruit, the grace to cleave to Him flows to us through his intercession. If we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because God worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, it is by the bread and wine which

our Melchisedec Priest brings out to us, that we are strengthened so to will and so to work. If we are to set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth, the mighty advocacy of Jesus Christ the Righteous is alone able to raise our souls, naturally cleaving to the dust, to desire heavenly things. If it be good and pleasant in the sight of our heavenly Father that brethren dwell together in unity, he has nothing more fragrant whereunto to liken it, than the precious ointment upon the head of the High Priest, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments. And when the Son of Man appeared to his servant John, to give by him his messages to the church on earth, He appeared in his priestly robe and girdle, to remind us that while precious promises are made "to him that overcometh," the grace to overcome must be received through the intercession of the Son whom Jehovah's immutable oath has consecrated an High Priest for evermore.



## “THE THRONE OF GRACE.”

WRITTEN PRIOR TO THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

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“Enter the Holiest, happy nation !  
Blood rent for you that open way ;  
Faith’s utterance is supplication,  
Adoption’s sweetest right—to pray.  
The boldest comers are most welcome there ;  
He honours Jesus best who proves Him most  
by prayer.”

**B**EING “accepted in the Beloved ;” by whom  
“we have access by faith into this grace  
wherein we stand ;” and “having liberty to  
enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a  
new and living way which He hath new made for  
us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and  
having a High-Priest over the house of God, let us  
draw near—let us come boldly unto the throne of  
grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace  
to help in time of need.” How strange that  
an invitation so lovingly given, a privilege so dearly  
bought, should be so little prized ; nay, that a

child of God, accepted in his Son, should shrink from entering into the Holiest, and shun the throne of grace. Oh, to how little apparent purpose did the dying cry of Jesus sound the signal for the rending of the veil!

When the flesh of the God-man was rent, and the shout of victory—"IT IS FINISHED!"—was heard in heaven, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. No more exclusion from the Holiest. The kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers. God Himself hath done it. Oh, wondrous love! From earth, by men impelled by devils, is the veil, the flesh of Jesus, rent; and God replies from heaven by rending the veil of separation between Himself and men.

The veil which hid God from man was sinful flesh. Therefore, He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and having made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, once and for ever condemned sin, in the flesh of the Holy One. When He died the veil was rent in the midst. It was torn in twain before the very centre of the mercy-seat. There God dwelt between the cherubim, and thither He invites his people to draw near—the poorest the most welcome.

If man had designed the embroidering of the veil, he would there have pictured *Paradise Lost*, and delineated the sad story

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree,"

by which the flesh of man had become a veil to hide his Maker from his view.

But God loves to dwell not upon the ruin but the restitution, and therefore the pattern which He showed to Moses in the Mount was wondrously inwrought with thoughts of Him, the Sinless One, who was to die for sin. And thus the veil was dyed with heavenly blue, and royal purple, and scarlet to bear witness of atoning blood ; made of fine twined linen, for the obedience of the Lord our Righteousness was of no coarse unyielding texture ; the body God had prepared Him was a fabric pliant to the subject will of Him who said, "In the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." It was, moreover, cunningly wrought with cherubim, displaying the lion's strength and majesty, the patient labour of the ox, intelligence and sympathy which belong alone to the human face and form divine, and the eagle's piercing eye and swift and soaring wing : expressing qualities which are found in perfection only in the Perfect One. That veil, so glorious, was rent in twain—the flesh, so white and glistening upon the holy mount, where God declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," was rent and torn, for it was the likeness, and to it was imputed all the guilt, of sinful flesh.

Glory to God that through that veil a new and living way is consecrated now for us ; we have liberty to enter into the Holiest by the shed blood

which declares, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more ;" and we have a High-Priest over the house of God, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. "LET US DRAW NEAR."

When the turn of Esther was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what the king's chamberlain appointed. She wisely judged that he who was most in the king's presence knew best how to prepare her for his favour. This was the secret of her acceptance. No wonder that she obtained favour in the sight of all that looked upon her, and that the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins ; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of the proud and self-willed woman who had refused to come at the king's commandment.

Thus it is with those who come to God. They who bring things of their own devising miss the favour which they seek ; but those who are content to receive just what the Spirit gives are sure to find acceptance. The Holy Ghost is the chamberlain who prepares the virgins for the presence of the Great King. He takes the things of Jesus and shows them to the willing and obedient soul, and they who enter the Holiest clad in the garments of salvation, and perfumed with the righteousness of Jesus, are very pleasant to the Father of Him to whom it is said, "All thy garments smell



of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad."

But although decked with ornaments which he had given her, and perfect in beauty through the comeliness which he had put upon her, when the time of trouble comes, how unwilling Esther is to go in unto the king and make intercession for her people. Mordecai, her kinsman-redeemer, the faithful and true witness, and the righteous servant of the king, warns and pleads: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" But Esther cannot go in until the flesh is mortified by a three days' fast. Then, on the third day, with her life in her hand, yet clad in royal apparel—priestly garments of glory and beauty—she stands in the inner court, where the king sits upon his throne. Is it a throne of judgment or of grace? How harshly and how falsely had she judged the king when she said, "If I perish, I perish." As soon as he saw her, the golden sceptre was held out, "and Esther *drew near* and touched the top of the sceptre." "Let *us* draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

What lessons are there here for saints. Mordecai



had nourished and brought up Esther, and in due time, purified and made meet, she is accepted by the king. Jesus, our Kinsman, hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and continually presents us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; yet how we shun the throne of grace. As Esther was bound up with her people, and could not escape if they perished, so hath God linked us together with all saints, hath tempered the body together as it hath pleased Him, so that no member can say to another, "I have no need of thee." "Only with all saints can we 'comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God.'" To every one of us Jesus is constantly saying by his Spirit what Mordecai said by the king's chamberlain to Esther, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

The returning year will bring with it the Week of Prayer. Better that it should henceforth pass unheeded, than that it should petrify into a cold and hard formality. There is danger of this. A worse than Haman has conspired against the people of the Lord. Strong crying and tears, of which Mordecai's loud and bitter cry was but the faint and far off prophecy, have been pressed from Mordecai's Lord by the

Adversary's hate. Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, and the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto his God and Father "for such a time as this." It were a shameful mockery to draw near in any other way than with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Esther's intercession was preceded by fasting and humiliation. Let us not miss this teaching. Whether there be abstinence from food or not, the carnal heart must be mortified, and the will of the flesh subdued. The invitation of the dear brethren at Lodianna expressly mentioned fasting ; and the Lord speaks of a kind which "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." There is indeed a fast which God hath not chosen—for a man to afflict his soul for a day, to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him—a fast of pharisees for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness, and to make their voice to be heard on high. But there is a fast which God hath chosen ; blessed are they who are like Paul, "in fastings oft." "Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that thou break every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou

bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee : the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer ; thou shalt cry, and He will say, Here I am."

Esther went in unto the king on the *third* day. That speaks of resurrection. It is on the resurrection morning God declares, "Thou art my Son, *to-day* have I begotten thee. Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Acts xiii. 33 ; Heb. v. 5 ; 6.) And they whom He hath made kings and priests to God must "know Him, and the *power of his resurrection*," to enable them to endure "the fellowship of his sufferings." Esther, selfishly thinking herself safe in the king's house, could not take up the burden of her people, until for three days and three nights she had mortified her-*self*. Paul could not rejoice in his sufferings for the saints, and fill up that which was behind of the affliction of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church, until he had known the power of his resurrection. The Lord of glory could not take his place as the Advocate of sinners before the throne until He had lain three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Neither can we stand between the living and the dead as God's

remembrancers, giving Him no rest until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, except we mortify our members which are upon the earth, and set our affection upon things above, because we are risen with Christ, and our life is hid with Christ in God.

If the royal priesthood enter the Holiest on this wise during the week of prayer, there will be liberty of utterance for praise, and prayer, and exhortation, because "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The groundless fear of confusion will be dissipated, for God will be obeyed in his own house when He says to his people, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Tedious discourses to men will give place to hearty counsel made living and powerful by the record of God's wonderful works among the children of men; and laboured addresses to Almighty God will be supplanted by the effectual fervent prayer which availeth much. Esther's error will be avoided, of preparing banquets for the king, and keeping him waiting before the request and petition is made known; for our God is not worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. And God, the great King, for the sake of his Righteous Servant, the Man whom the King delighteth to honour, will give us victory over all our enemies; and we shall hasten the day of God when the fear

of Jesus will fall upon all men, and the substance shall come of which those words are but the shadow : " For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces ; for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater."

" Enter'd the holy place above,  
Cover'd with meritorious scars,  
The tokens of his dying love,  
Our great High-Priest in glory bears ;  
He pleads his passion on the tree,  
He shows himself to God for me.

" Before the throne my Saviour stands,  
My Friend and Advocate appears ;  
My name is graven on his hands,  
And Him the Father always hears ;  
While low at Jesus' cross I bow,  
He hears the blood of sprinkling now.

" This instant, now, I may receive  
The answer of his powerful prayer ;  
This instant, now, by Him I live,  
His prevalence with God declare ;  
And soon my spirit in his hands,  
Shall stand where my Forerunner stands."



## “SINFUL FLESH.”

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**T**HE depravity of human nature is acknowledged as a doctrine by Christians; but the depth of this depravity is very far from being even theoretically apprehended, and is by most of us practically denied. Would the daughters of Eve lavish outward adornment upon their transient beauty, if they believed that the poison of the Old Serpent had infected and corrupted every fibre of their frame? Would the sons of Adam boast themselves in their power and wisdom, if they knew that the nature of him who is a liar from the beginning had so become incorporated with their nature, as to darken with the smoke of the bottomless pit the light in which their first father walked with God?

By grace we are children of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. By nature we are children of the devil, by faith in the Old Serpent, who through his subtlety beguiled Eve. Reader, have you considered this? Is it written on your heart

as the very truth of God? The same apostle who says, “Ye are *of God*, little children,” says, “Cain was *of that wicked one*.” Cain was the first-born of human kind. He was a worshipper of God. He may have been a fond husband and an affectionate father, a dutiful son and a kind brother, until God’s rejection made it manifest that he was “*of that wicked one*.” With the life which he received from his parents, he inherited also the poison-taint of sin which the Serpent had injected into their nature, and which had permeated their being as certainly as the venom of the adder is carried by the blood into every tissue of the living body into which it enters.

Cain was a worshipper. He desired to be accepted of God. He had a zeal of God. He was the very prototype of those who in later days, ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. The beginning of time produced the worshipper who murdered righteous Abel: the fulness of time produced a generation of worshippers, full of zeal for God, who murdered Jesus Christ the Righteous. And as the Holy Ghost declares that Cain was “*of that wicked one*,” so the Incarnate Word assured the Jews, “Ye are *of your father the devil*, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh



a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it."

Are we all by nature akin to Cain and Israel? Is the human race one family? Then is every individual of the race *of* him who is essentially a murderer and a liar. Man, know thyself. "That which is born of the flesh *is* flesh." "Flesh and blood ('the life of all flesh is the blood thereof') cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

"The filth of the flesh." What a loathsome expression. We turn away sickened, as our eye falls upon some mass of dead matter turning to corruption; but the filthiest thing God sees under heaven is living flesh. Those chapters in Leviticus and other parts of Old and New Testament Scripture which we cannot read except alone with God—what do they mean? Those issues of blood, those runnings of the reins, which defile the man and everything he touches—does the Holy Ghost include these when He says that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"? What then is the instruction we are to derive from these portions which for the most part we so willingly and sinfully neglect?

The great lesson which they teach is this: that all the issues of the flesh are utterly unclean. Take the ordinance relating to leprosy. This is generally



applied to the unconverted, in the same way that the curses in the Prophets are fastened upon Israel, and the blessings appropriated to the Church. But nothing is gained by this untruthfulness. The leper in Israel had been redeemed by blood—his proper place was within the camp; but when the leprosy broke out he was utterly unclean. “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be.”

The distinctive characteristic of the leprosy was “the quickening of living flesh in the rising (or swelling)” —the inflamed part which the surgeon calls “proud flesh.” Read in the light of New Testament truth, how full of meaning is this.

The apostles of Jesus Christ comprehend the whole natural man—the principles and desires—the will—in that one term “the flesh.” Translated into New Testament language then, “the quickening of living flesh in the rising” would be found in such a passage as this: “Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, *vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*” “Proud flesh!” Oh how proud it is. How many leprous men are accounted great in Israel!

“The issue of blood—the running of the reins,”—what depth of meaning is there in the phrase, when

collated with a few other Scriptures. "The blood is the life." "Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life." The "issue of blood," then, represented "the issues of life." According to the condition of the heart will be the issues of its life. It was what proceeded from the flesh that defiled the Israelite and all he touched. And the Lord says to us, "Hear and understand ; those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart ; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies : these are the things which defile a man." And as the oak is in the acorn, as the human race was in the loins of Adam, so are all these iniquities in every human heart.

"The issue of blood—the running of the reins"—is interpreted again by "the walking of the soul—the wandering of the desire." And not without reason does the wisdom of God say, "Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life." Ay, keep it above all human keeping ; for the issues of its evil life—the torrent of "fleshly lusts which war against the soul"—will issue with a vehemence which no barriers of thine shall be able to withstand. Therefore "commit the keeping of thy soul in well doing unto HIM as unto a faithful Creator," who is able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and to extract from the poisonous flower of thy heart a honey sweet to his

taste, because the Spirit of his Son is hidden there.

Circumcision, the sign of the covenant of works, supposed the possibility of putting away the filth of the flesh—of separating the virus from the blood—of cutting out the cancer of sin, and of restoring fallen Adam to health and life. Two thousand years of increasing rebellion and apostasy showed that the little leaven of that one whispered lie in Eden had leavened the whole lump of human life, and produced a bloated heaving mass of sin.

Therefore, circumcision has failed. The flesh which is left is as filthy as that which is taken away; and so the body of sin must be destroyed, just as the old world was drowned; and when the Holy Ghost, speaking of "the ark, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water," says, "the antitype whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, by the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ," He is careful to insert in a parenthesis, "*not* the putting away of the filth of the flesh"—that experiment has wholly failed—"but the answer of a good conscience toward God"—a conscience which owns the truth about the man's own utter corruption, and which has been cleansed by the shed blood—the sacrificed life—of Jesus, the Son of God.

Marvel not that He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; that his visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. He came in the likeness of sinful

flesh. He came that He might bear our sins in his own body on the tree. Let our souls be humbled in the presence of the majesty and glory of this incarnate Love. For what the law could not do, in that (though holy, just, and good) it was weak through our sinful flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. "For He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."



## “JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION.”

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“**D**ISAGREEABLE subject,” said a friend, on reading the preceding article on “Sinful Flesh.”

Disagreeable truths lie on the threshold of the house wherein are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The unsearchable riches of Christ can neither be discovered nor attained until we have passed the Rubicon which divides the life of self from life in God.

But not only does it appear that the filthiness of the flesh is a disagreeable subject; the doctrine of the resurrection, as taught in the Scriptures, also finds little favour with men. Not only were the Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit) grieved that the apostles taught through Jesus the resurrection from the dead; but as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, the rulers of the people and elders of Israel, straitly threatened and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. And

when Paul, having turned from Israel to the Gentiles, preached to the Athenians, some said, "What will this babbler say?" other some, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods," because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter."

How shall we account for this repugnance of man's heart to hear of resurrection? The cold caterpillar that buries itself in a cabbage or a pear, would surely rejoice to know that one day it should be transformed into a winged creature, flying in the sunshine; but ere the worm becomes a butterfly it must be buried in a chrysalis—before it assumes its ethereal form, must die. This is the repulsive thought. Man clings so tenaciously to life, that not even the prospect of resurrection can rob death of its sting, or the grave of its terror. Lazarus must lie in the tomb and stink, before he hears the cry, "Come forth." From this man instinctively recoils. Yet that which we call death is but the shadow of death. The dead ones that we loved, the Sarahs that we bury out of our sight, are but a constantly repeated parable, teaching us the fact that every one by nature is a putrid corpse—a Lazarus gone to corruption—a soul dead in trespasses and sins.

Men hate the doctrine that, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." They will

cry from week to week, "Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders ;" but they mock at Jesus and the resurrection, because they do not believe what God declares : "They are corrupt ; they are all gone aside ; they are together become unprofitable." Compare the marginal reading of Psalm xiv. 3 with John xi. 39.

But they whom the Holy Ghost has convinced of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, gladly hear of resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ. Go where they would, "Jesus and the resurrection" was the gospel the apostles preached. "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you ; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." "When they had prayed, the house was shaken where they were gathered together ; and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

This involved the whole truth of God. The controversy between God and man comes to an issue here. Men judged Jesus as a sinner, and crucified Him. God declared that man's judgment was unjust, inasmuch as He raised Him from the dead. On the other hand, God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And having judged Him thus, He raised Him from the dead, in evidence that our sins, which He



had borne in his own body on the tree, were put away for ever. "He was delivered for our offences ; He was raised again for our justification."

Thus, in preaching Jesus and the resurrection, we preach that through which the Holy Ghost convinces the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment ; through which also He draws all who believe, by the Son, to the Father.

To the believing soul how precious is Jesus and the resurrection ! It is not a lifeless creed : it is resurrection through the Man Christ Jesus. It is union in eternal life with Him who sat wearied on the well, and was refreshed by giving living water to the sinner, who had denied him natural water—union with the Son of Man who wept over Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. It is union in eternal life with Jesus the Son of God, our Great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are, without sin.

Paul, though he more than any other man had whereof he might trust in the flesh, counted what things according to men's esteem were gain, to be all loss for Christ. As to ancestry, and position, and acquirement, and religion, Saul of Tarsus stood on the pinnacle of glory and perfection as to the flesh. Kings and conquerors might be greater among the Gentiles, but among the chosen people of God there was not one who had so much reason to have confidence in the flesh. Yet when he had



seen Jesus, he counted it all dung. The discovery which Solomon made, after years of the gratification of every desire of his heart, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, was made by Saul in a moment by one sight of the risen Lord Jesus. Then he knew that all the world lies dead in sin, and all he now cared for was that by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.

It is no figure of speech that the apostle uses when he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." The death of the body is but the shadow of that death which consists in being cut off from God by sin. And the resurrection of the just will be but the manifestation of the fact, that ye *are* risen with Christ. For so soon as a man loses his life for Jesus' sake, he finds it unto life eternal. For "this is life eternal—to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

Eternal life is life in resurrection. "I am the Resurrection and the Life." God exerts the same exceeding greatness of his mighty power in us who believe, as He did in Jesus when He raised Him from the dead. The same God who set Jesus at his own right hand in the heavenly places, quickened us together with Christ when we were dead in sins, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ;

that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. This resurrection of the saints is as surely an accomplished fact as the resurrection of Christ from the dead. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

If this be truth, it is doctrine according to godliness ; it will promote "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." In all the Epistles without exception the utter condemnation of the flesh, and life in the risen Lord Jesus, are the foundation truths on which are based exhortations to holy walking in the minutest as well as the most important events of life.

To the Romans Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into *death*, that like as Christ was *raised from the dead* by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." "For in that He died He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The summing up of that wonderful chapter on the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv., is, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In the second Epistle to the same, the apostle says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died [in Him] ; and He died for all, that they which live [in Him] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died and rose again for them."

To the Galatians : "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks [the stigma, the reproach] of the Lord Jesus." Oh, glorious independence of man, which can only be known as we realize our crucifixion on his cross, and our resurrection in his risen life.

We often hear the former part of the Epistle to the Ephesians expounded and dilated on, but more seldom the later chapters ; to Paul, however, the glorious truth that we have been quickened and raised in Christ, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, paves the way for loving exhortation to be "followers of God, as dear children ;" avoiding not only uncleanness and covetousness, but foolish talking and jesting. And he goes on to give counsel how the saints are to behave as husbands and wives, as children and parents, as masters and servants ; "praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

And so through all the rest, not only of Paul's Epistles, but those of Peter, and James, and John, and Jude, the hopeless ruin of the flesh, and risen life in the glorified Lord Jesus, are the central truths upon which are hung exhortations, to the minutest details, as to holiness of life.

One great danger of many saints at the present moment is, lest they should be so exclusively occupied with the glorious truths of our crucifixion and resurrection in Christ—our completeness in Him—as to forget the watchfulness and prayer, humility, and holiness, which the Spirit of God invariably enjoins as their proper results.

Many are now proving the truth of the assertion that, "Nothing is more certain than that Christians will get into a lax and lean condition of soul (and that as the very consequence of their *doctrinal* establishment in grace), if there be not a daily living by faith unto God. . . . Our members are *his* instruments, to whom pertain the battle and the victory. That victory is surely ours in every struggle, so long as our eye is singly resting upon Jesus. But where the will of God is practically disregarded, the believer's ability to conquer sin, and to wield his own members as effective instruments of righteousness, must be diminished in a corresponding ratio."

God forbid that they whom He has quickened should degenerate into a frigid and joyless antinomianism, consequent upon the neglect of those

loving entreaties to godliness of life which the Spirit always connects with the statement of the believer's high calling in Christ Jesus.

" Jesus, our great High-Priest,  
For us the gift received ;  
For us and all the rest  
Who have in Him believed :  
Forth from our Head the blessing goes,  
And all his seamless coat o'erflows.

" On all his chosen ones  
The precious oil comes down :  
It runs, and as it runs,  
It ever will run on ;  
Even to his skirts (the meanest name  
That longs to love the bleeding Lamb).

" From Aaron's beard it rolls,  
(Those nearest to his face,)  
The humble, trembling souls  
Who feebly sue for grace :  
I know the grace for all is rec,  
For, lo ! it reaches now to me.

" Even now our Lord doth pour  
The blessing from above,  
A kindly gracious shower  
Of heart-reviving love ;  
The former and the latter rain,  
The love of God and love of man.



## THE HEART-SEARCHER.

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“He that searcheth the hearts.”

**I**T is instructive to observe the divine discrimination of the Saviour, in his dealing with those to whom He spoke. If the glad tidings of salvation assumed various forms in its presentation to different persons, it was not for the sake of variety, but with the nicest adaptation to the inward condition of each to whom it was addressed.

When the Son of man appeared in vision to his servant John, He declared that “all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts.” What He is in heaven, He was on earth—the Heart-searcher; and lessons of the deepest interest may be learned in listening with attentive ear to the words He spake to pharisees and publicans, to doctors of the law and sinful women, during his sojourn here. He did not enlist under his banner all who came saying, “Lord, Lord.” He knew that every mere professor

was an accession not of strength but weakness, and He therefore tested them as Gideon tested Israel, and with much the same results.

Thus, when one comes to Him, saying, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," instead of encouraging him He replies, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." For He saw that in this scribe the word had no deepness of earth, and that in time of persecution he would fall away : and it might well be, that the check thus given to his enthusiasm may have led to searchings and exercises of heart which resulted in his subsequently coming to Jesus, not as a follower of the great Teacher, but as a lost sinner to the feet of the lowly Saviour.

But Jesus says to another, "Follow me." And although he demurs to an immediate surrender of himself, saying, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father," the Lord insists, "Let the dead bury their dead ; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Then comes a third, whose condition is as it were midway between the former two : "Lord, I will follow Thee ; but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at home at my house." He is not so rash in his profession as the first, but the ties which bind him to earth are not withered as in the second case. The father of this latter is not dead. "They who are at home at my house," shows how living were the old associations, and



he gets for answer, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 57—62). We have here a living illustration of the testimony of the Evangelist: "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 23—25).

In like manner, when the young man came running and kneeling to the Lord, asking, "Good Master, what shall I *do* that I may inherit eternal life?" He did not explain to him his erroneous views, and seek to convince his judgment by an exposition of the truth; but He took him at his word, and bid him keep the law; and when that failed to convince him of sin, He told him, "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and take up thy cross and follow me," and the young man went away grieved, for he had great possessions. It is a lesson needful to be learned by those who aspire to win souls for Jesus, that the way of God may be to let some go away sorrowful. The grace to give away the great possessions to which the natural heart clings so tenaciously, may not be immediately bestowed; and it may be a true exercise of faith to leave such a one in the hands of the Father of spirits and the Searcher of hearts.

In pursuing this subject, we are led to remark



that the ministry of the Apostle of our profession, Christ Jesus, was not confined to the good news of salvation to sinners. He earned the hatred of the world by testifying that the works thereof were evil. The Holy Ghost, by Him, as by his followers after his resurrection, convinced the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He was the Light of the world: not only to guide seeking sinners to the perfect day, but to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness; "for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

The Gospel of John sets forth this twofold character of the ministry of Jesus in a most vivid way. The miracle wrought at Bethesda on the Sabbath brings upon Him the censure of the self-righteous legalists of the time, and eight chapters (v.—xii.) are mainly occupied with the contest between the darkness and the light—between the Jews and Jesus. But after this follows a totally different scene, describing the sweet communion of the Lord with his disciples on the Passover-eve, when He washed their feet, and supped with them, and stilled their troubled hearts with the promise of the Comforter, until, having prayed that prayer so dear to them and to all that have believed through their word, He passed over the brook Kedron into the garden of Gethsemane, where the traitorous Judas betrayed Him with a kiss.

These two portions of John's Gospel are as distinct as the two covenants. In the one we see

God, veiled in human flesh indeed, and unaccompanied by blackness, and darkness, and tempest ; but yet a living Sinai to the proud professors of a law they could not keep. In the other He appears as Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem to those who had come as sinners to be saved by his grace alone.

The same contrast is manifest in that unspeakably beautiful narrative of the woman taken in adultery. To the hypocrites who accused her, though themselves as guilty as she, He was the Holy One of whom it is said, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." But to the culprit bowed before Him, dumb under her acknowledged guilt, He was the Faithful Witness that "mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

But while we trace in this Gospel the varied way in which Jesus manifests Himself as the sinner's Saviour, we should miss the moral of the story if we neglected to note the *reason* of this diversity, and to observe that in every case the revelation was in perfect accordance with the state of the person to whom it was made.

In the first chapter, to Nathanael, who comes so readily at Philip's invitation to see if any good thing can come out of Nazareth, and if Jesus the son of Joseph be indeed He of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, the Heart-searcher reveals Himself at

once : “ Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.” But to Nicodemus He must teach the humbling lesson of man’s ruin, and of his own ignorance and need, before He reveals Himself at all ; and then it is not gloriously as Son of God and King of Israel, but as made a curse for us ; as Son of Man, not with the angels of God ascending and descending upon Him, but lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness. For Nathanael was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile ; while Nicodemus was flesh and not spirit, and must be born again.

The woman at the well of Samaria would gladly have the water which would, once for all, allay her thirst, and spare her evermore the toil of coming to the well to draw ; but He brings her sin to remembrance, for He came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance ; and therefore He convinces her of sin by bidding her “ Go, call thy husband, and come hither,” and commends Himself to her as the Christ, by telling her all that ever she did. On the other hand, of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, He straightway asks, “ Wilt thou be made whole ?” for all nature’s strength had been wasted out of him in the thirty and eight years he had lain there (compare Deut. ii. 14) ; and all hope from creature help had fled : “ Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool.” Without another word, the Saviour bids him “ Rise, take up thy bed and walk,” for “ when He saw that there was

no man, his own arm brought salvation" (Isa. lix. 16).

How differently, again, from his language to Nathanael or Nicodemus, to the Samaritan woman or the impotent man, is his tone to the man-pleasing Jews: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." And to the selfish multitude: "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." And how He tested those who followed Him, so that "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him" (John vi. 66). How truly did the officers tell the scribes and pharisees who had sent them to take Him, "Never man spake like this man." How vainly did the priests and rulers strive to pierce the cloud which veiled his glory from their sinful sight, and how did they writhe under the burning words of holiness which fell like living spirit upon their quick, raw flesh (John vi. 63; Lev. xiii. 10), and the inner meaning of which their natural minds could not understand: "I speak the words which I have heard of my Father, and ye do the works which ye have seen with your father."

The man born blind, by the anointing with clay and washing in Siloam, is made to see; while to them who despised the softly flowing waters of Siloah, and said, "We see," comes that terrible word, "Your sin remaineth."

When their brother Lazarus lies dead, Martha and Mary successively greet Him with the same exclamation, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died," but how differently he treats them; for Martha had added words beyond her faith—self-confident words, "*I know* that whatsoever Thou shalt ask of God He will give it Thee," and she must learn that she knows nothing yet as she ought to know; but when Mary weeps at his feet, He is troubled in spirit, and says, "Where have ye laid him?"

Other such illustrations will occur to the thoughtful reader who is interested in the subject; and many and various reflections will be suggested to different minds. We add but one remark. No *man* can pretend to be a searcher of hearts: that is the prerogative of God alone. Nevertheless, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and they who will observe the ways of Jesus shall not watch in vain. He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps; and they who follow Him in solitary prayer, shall partake of the wisdom, and grace, and power, which marked his public words and acts.



## PERFECT MEN.

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HERE is sound divinity, no less than historical accuracy, in that sad line of one of our poets—

“The trail of the serpent is over it all.”

Yet it contains but a feeble measure of the truth ; for not only is the serpent's trail over all ; its poison is *in* all and *through* all. “Because of sin the land mourneth ;” “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now ;” the human body, made in the image of God, has become a “vile body”—a body of humiliation ; it must die ere it can live, and triumph, and reign ; for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Humanity is rotten at the core ; God says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; who can know it ?” The earth whence we were taken has been so defiled by her children's sin that she must be purged by fire : “The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be

burned up." Even the sky above us has participated in the consequences of our fall, and in the day of God "the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Human hands cannot touch without defiling the purest things ; therefore Moses sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. One of the great lessons taught in Leviticus is the deeply-rooted and wide-spread contamination of sin. The leper must dwell alone ; without the camp shall his habitation be. There is no cure for the leprous house or garment but utter destruction. Every issue of the flesh renders every one who is touched thereby unclean. For a like reason Ezekiel forbids the priests to wear any woollen garment when they enter the inner court to minister before God ; they must be clothed in linen ; " they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat."

The teaching of the New Testament is in perfect harmony with that of the Old ; there is no eradication of the principle of sin from the nature of man, but through dissolution of the body of flesh and blood. Therefore while the apostle John writes to his little children that they "sin not," he also says: "If we say that we *have no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

In the presence of the Bible it would seem impossible that any intelligent Christian mind



could entertain the idea of a condition now on earth in which indwelling or inbred sin has been ejected from its tenement. In fact, we are slow to believe that any actually do deliberately entertain a notion so opposed to universal experience and to the Word of God.

There is no subject, perhaps, on which it is more difficult to speak without being misunderstood, because terms and expressions often fail to convey to other minds the thoughts intended by those who use them ; and therefore none should enter upon such a discussion unless prepared, in a meek and lowly spirit, to take the place of learners, and with kindness and candour to seek distinctly to understand what their brethren *mean*, and not to fasten upon them views which they do not really hold. We are convinced that all godly and earnest souls are far more nearly in agreement than they often appear to be, and that diversity of opinion is magnified by want of calm and patient consideration of the words in which opinion is expressed.

The Holy Spirit has called some men perfect. It is written of Job : "That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." The narrative of Job's temptations and troubles shows that there have been few men, before or since, who could be compared with him ; he was not only a king over himself, but a priest on behalf of his family and friends. - Time after



time the adversary and the tempter came and found nothing in him : " In all this Job sinned not with his lips, nor charged God foolishly." But as the probe descended deeper and deeper still, it reached at last an evil spring, and through the lips from whence had flowed such sweet waters as these—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord !" there came the bitter waters of self-justification, reviling of his " miserable comforters," and foolish charges against God.

Nevertheless, the Spirit of holiness has himself declared that Job was " a perfect and upright man," and He has explained his meaning by adding, " one that feared God and eschewed evil." This is the divine idea of a perfect man : one who is a sincere, true-hearted follower and imitator of God. Thus God testified that " Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations ; Noah walked with God." So the Lord said to Abraham, " I am the Almighty God : walk before Me, and be thou perfect." If we compare the course of Abraham with that of Lot, and mark how the father of the faithful grew in grace and in the knowledge of God by constant communion with Him, while Lot was continually receding farther from Him, until at last he was " scarcely saved," " saved so as by fire," we can well perceive the fitness of the term " perfect " as applied to Abraham.

Jacob was a frequently failing man ; but the

God of truth, in comparing him with Esau, says, "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field ; and Jacob was a perfect man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. xxv. 27 ; compare marginal references). Here is a contrast similar to that between Abraham and Lot. Esau had no hope or desire beyond this present world ; Jacob was a pilgrim and a stranger here, journeying to the better land. "By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise ; for he looked for the city which hath the foundations ; whose Builder and Maker is God."

In accordance with this, we read of Asa and Hezekiah that their "heart was perfect with the Lord," while Amaziah "did right, but *not* with a perfect heart." His motives were not pure ; his eye was not single. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." David, on the contrary, says, "I will walk in my house with a perfect heart ;" "Unite my heart to fear thy name ;" "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." It is this singleness of purpose that is pleasing to the Lord, and which made David "a man after God's own heart."

This Old Testament view of perfection is sup-

ported and explained by the New Testament. Paul speaks of himself and others as perfect. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded"—though he has just before said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Then immediately follow the words, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect"—clearly showing that the scriptural idea of perfection is not that of having attained the prize, but of running for it, as the one business and aim of life. Bengel's note on the passage before us (Phil. iii. 12-15) is quite to this effect. "τέλειος and τελεώμενος differ. The first is applied to one who is fit for running (vers. 15, 16), the last (ver. 12) to him who is nearest to the prize, who is on the point of receiving it." This distinction of terms in the original is not preserved in the English version.

The idea of plucking up sin by the roots, of being freed from the principle of inbred corruption while yet in the body, is, as it appears to us, opposed to many passages of Scripture, and especially to 1 John i. 8: "If we say we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But even they who use such terms as "the separation of sin from the soul," evidently cannot mean any such absolute separation as that which is effected at the resurrection of the just, at the coming of "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself"—because, in immediate connection with such terms, they say that as perfection, or sanctification, or perfect love, can only be received by faith, so neither can it be retained, except by the continued exercise of the same faith. Nay, it may be needful that to one who, like Paul, had been caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, should be given a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations.

A perfect man, according to the Bible idea, is one who follows the Lord fully; one who, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; one who sets his affection (his mind) on things above, and not on earthly things; one who, giving all diligence, adds to his faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to

patience, godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love ; one who is not careful and troubled about many things, but who sits at Jesus' feet, having chosen the one thing needful—that good part which shall not be taken away from him ; one who looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word ; one who lives by faith in Jesus, not only as a crucified Saviour, but as an ascended High Priest, able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, and who, by constantly so coming, is continuously saved from sin ; one who, co-operating with God in Christ in the warfare against and salvation from sin, runs not as uncertainly, fights not as one that beats the air, but keeps under his body, and brings it into subjection, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in his body ; one who walks in the light, as God is in the light, God and he having fellowship with one another, while the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth him from all sin ; one whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night ; one who exercises himself to keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man ; one whose eye is single, and his whole body therefore full of light ; one who is kept in perfect peace, because his mind is stayed on God, and he trusts

in Him ; a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

If this be perfection, there will, of course, be various degrees of attainment, "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold." And Paul seems to recognise this when he says, "If in anything ye (who are perfect) be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." There may be little children, and young men, and fathers, but all they, in the gracious estimate of God, are perfect, who have come to this resolve, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Some may have long been pressing toward the mark, others may have just begun the race, but each of those who, through faith in Jesus having eternal life, are able to say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise," or of whom God can say, "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord," is enrolled in heaven among the number of "as many as be perfect."

These are the salt of the earth, the light of the world ; they suffer persecution because they live godly in Christ Jesus. These are they of whom the world is not worthy, but of whom the world had never sorer need than now. They are not to be found in any one communion. They are scattered here and there, some in one sect, some in another, some in no sect at all ; some even in



Babylon, though not *of* her. We have spoken of them individually, but they are not mere units, they are members of a body, and they cannot grow or multiply except in unison with the rest; the paschal Lamb is for the household (Exod. xii. 3, 4); for "*only with all saints* may we be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God."

The sphere for the exercise of the graces of them that are perfect is found in the household of God no less than in the world; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in converting the erring believer, and so saving a soul from death, and covering a multitude of sins; in restoring in the spirit of meekness the weak one who has been overtaken in a fault; in endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; in confessing our faults one to another, and praying one for another, that we may be healed; in exhorting one another daily while it is called To-day, and so much the more as we see the day approaching; in watching for one another's souls, that we may give account with joy and not with grief. Prior to this responsibility towards the household of God comes the individual responsibility to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; to hold fast grace, that we may serve God acceptably, with reverence



and godly fear. And on the fulfilment of these individual and relative responsibilities, which require unceasing trust in the atoning and intercessory work of our adorable Lord and Saviour, depends, far more than on outward effort, our capacity to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

“ Help me, Oh God, to run my race,  
Without a purpose of my own ;—  
To know no time, to know no place,  
But that which comes from Thee alone.

“ How vain and helpless every plan,  
Which builds itself on human choice ;  
The hope, the strength of feeble man,  
Is found in listening to Thy voice.

“ Then let my roving thoughts be still,  
My earthly hopes and purpose slain ;  
And in their stead the glorious will  
Of God’s great thoughts and purpose reign.

“ All thoughts, all hearts, Oh God, control ;  
And most of all, be this Thy care,  
To build Thy kingdom in the soul,  
And wield Thy mighty sceptre there.”



## THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

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**G**OD sanctified (that is, separated) Israel to Himself by the blood of the passover lamb and by the waters of the Red Sea. Once out of Egypt they should no more return thither. In like manner, the believer in Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen, is a saint, is sanctified to God for evermore: "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But from the day when Israel sang the song of Moses in the wilderness, while they saw the Egyptians lying dead upon the sea-shore, God began a sanctifying *process* in them, weaning them from the flesh-pots, the leeks, the garlic, and the onions, and all the rank food of Egypt, in order that a taste might be formed in them for angels' food.

For three days they find no water; then they come to bitter waters; but Moses cries to Jehovah, and He shows him a tree (type of the tree of Calvary) which when he had cast into the waters,

the waters were made sweet. Then they come to Elim, with its twelve wells of water and three-score and ten palm trees, beneath whose sheltering shade they encamp by the refreshing waters. Then, following the cloud, they depart from Elim, and murmur in the wilderness for flesh, remembering when they sat by the flesh-pots of Egypt and ate bread to the full, but forgetting the rigorous bondage wherewith Pharaoh had made them serve. Then God gives manna; attaching certain conditions concerning its gathering, which Israel invariably disobeys. In the third month after they had left Egypt, on the same day they come into the wilderness of Sinai, and encamp before the mount, and God says: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Then the Lord says unto Moses, "Go unto the people and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes. And be ready against the third day." Thus, although the children of Israel had been once and for ever sanctified to God, they needed to be continually and progressively sanctified for the Lord's presence and for his service.

All this is fulfilled in the Christian believer. For the same apostle who writes to the saints (or sanctified ones) at Thessalonica, including in that term all the believers, whatever the degree of their growth in grace, prays for them, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." And as at Moses' command the people sanctified themselves against the third day, and washed their clothes, so the apostle says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

But this continual sanctification is a painful process. In the case of Israel it involved the wandering of the people for eight-and-thirty years from the day when the spies brought an evil report upon the land, until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host. And in the case of the Christian saint it involves in like manner the withering of all the strength of nature, that God alone may be exalted. The impotent man lay at the pool of Bethesda for

the same period as Israel wandered in the wilderness (eight-and-thirty years) and with the same result; he could not help himself, and had *no man* to help him. Then comes the blessing. Jesus saith unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." "HE saw that there was *no man*, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his arm brought salvation unto Him, and his righteousness it sustained Him."

It is our belief that early in the history of every redeemed sinner there comes a time when the Spirit speaks in secret to the soul, in some such words as those to Israel, "If thou wilt obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then thou shalt be a peculiar treasure unto Me." And then, having laid before the soul all his statutes and judgments, He puts it to the test, by bringing it to the borders of the land of holiness, the land flowing with milk and honey, which some holy desires within, like Caleb and Joshua, would at once go up and possess, in spite of mighty giants and cities walled to heaven. But there are other dwellers in the town of Mansoul which shrink and fear, and therefore the Holy Land is unpossessed. But God wearies the thick cloud of human will; the Dayspring takes hold of the wings of the earth, that the wicked may be shaken out of it. "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into

captivity ; therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed." But "the Lord's portion is his people ; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness ; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings ; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields." Thus doth God deal with his elect, keeping alive the Caleb and Joshua within, but wearing out the unbelieving and cowardly flesh, until the promised land is entered by the willing soul.

It tends to spiritual inactivity to interpret the wilderness wandering as the earthly journey, and Canaan as the heavenly rest, of the people of God. The wilderness is the place where the flesh is unjudged and uncircumcised ; where all the progress that is made is of a negative kind, the slow wasting of fleshly energy and proud self-will ; where no battles are fought, no foes subdued. Jordan is the river not of death but of judgment ; the new generation passes through its swelling on dry land, because Moses, the servant, is dead, and Joshua, *the Lord of Salvation*, is in command. Now circumcision is renewed. Then Jericho falls, the

land is entered, and Israel becomes a man of war, and eats of the old corn of the land. This is well expressed by one of the sweetest singers of Christian Israel :—

“Oh, that I might at once go up,  
No more on this side Jordan stop,  
But now the land possess ;  
This moment end my legal years,  
Sorrows, and sins, and doubts, and fears,  
A howling wilderness.”

And again :

“Lord, I believe a rest remains,  
To all thy people known,  
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,  
And God is loved alone.

“A rest where all the soul’s desire  
Is fixed on things above,  
Where fear, and pain, and grief expire,  
Cast out by perfect love.

“Oh, that I now the rest might know,  
Believe and enter in ;  
Now, Saviour, now, the power bestow,  
And bid me cease from sin.”

Is our reader one in whom the wasting process is going on ? Do you count it strange because of the fiery trial which tries you ? Ah, remember Him who says, “All souls are mine.” “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the *end* of the Lord : that the Lord is very pitiful, and of



tender mercy." Say with the suffering patriarch, in the confidence of faith : " Behold, I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him : on the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him ; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take : *when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.*"

The soul, like Jeshurun, may have entered the land, and there have waxed fat and kicked. " Therefore," says Jehovah, " I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope ; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi (My Husband), and shalt call me no more Baali (My Lord). For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name." " Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby."



## THE CHRISTIAN'S REST.

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**G**OD has promised rest to his people. But rest can only be enjoyed when work is done. God did not rest until "the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made ; and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it ; because that in it He had rested from all his work which God created and made." This rest of God is emphatically set forth as the type and pattern of his people's rest : "For He that is entered into his rest, He also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." These words, applicable in a secondary sense to the believing soul, primarily refer to the Lord Jesus, the Forerunner of his people. In his intercessory prayer He had said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth ; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ;" and on the cross had cried, "It is

finished," and yielded up his spirit into his Father's hands. Then the Captain of our salvation entered into his rest, and into that rest his people are earnestly exhorted to follow Him.

This rest is not a place, but a condition. The Lord God was in the heavens alike when He wrought and when He rested. The accomplishment of his work made no change in this respect. So the Lord Jesus entered into his rest fifty days before He ascended on the cloud to heaven. He rested when his work was done.

It was impossible that the people of God could enter into rest so long as they were under Law. "This do, and thou shalt live," effectually barred them from their rest. Moses, the giver of the *Law*, could not bring them into the land of *promise*; one transgression sufficed to prevent his own entry there. Joshua led the new generation into the land, but the land was not the rest, though it was a type of it. Caleb and Joshua, who believed God, entered into rest while in the wilderness, but the disobedient people did not enter into rest, though they possessed the land.

The obedience of faith overleaps the limits of dispensation. The elders, in their less favoured day, obtained a good report through faith; they saw the promises and embraced them from afar. Disobedient unbelief, on the other hand, would go back from the wilderness to Egypt (Exod. xvi. 3); from the land to the wilderness (Josh. vii. 7);

from the Gospel to the Law (Gal. iv. 21); from the glorious liberty of the children of God to bondage and condemnation (1 Cor. xi. 17-34).

That the land was not the rest is sufficiently proved, in that the Holy Spirit said by David, "To-day—after so long a time—[five centuries after they had entered the land] To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." These words also prove that the rest is not heaven, because it might be enjoyed "To-day." For as we have said, Faith overleaps dispensational barriers. Jesus told the Pharisees, "Your father Abraham saw my day : he saw it, and was glad." Though dispensationally under the gloom of Law, they who believed God lived in spirit under grace; while many of their children, whose lot has been cast under the sunshine of Gospel grace, look back regretfully to legal ordinances; and whereas they ought for the time to be teachers, need themselves to be taught again what be the first principles of the oracles of God.

In order to understand the meaning of Israel's history, we must remember that outward circumstances assume forms answerable to the inward life. The promised land was to Israel a rest from the perils and miseries of the waste howling wilderness. In the wilderness the Law demanded a holy obedience, which was impossible from an uncircumcised people in whose members the law of sin was continually working to bring forth fruit unto

death. As soon as they entered the land of promise, they were circumcised ; the flesh was judged, and its filthiness put away ; the ground whereon they stood was holy ; the Captain of the Lord's host was now come. Thus the land of promise typified the condition which the Apostle Paul describes to the saints at Philippi : " We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."

The promise left of entering into rest—the rest that remaineth unto the people of God—is (1) a present rest : " As it is said, *To-day*." (2) It is grounded in obedience—" if ye will hear his voice." (3) It is a condition of heart—" harden not your hearts." (4) It consists in believing God : " We that believe do enter into rest." (5) It requires a cessation from our own works : " He that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (6) It requires close personal watchfulness to maintain this rest : " Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (7) Mutual love for, watchfulness over, and faithfulness to, one another, are also indispensable to this end : " Exhort one another daily, while it is called *To-day*, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

This is, of all others, the business in which we are not to be slothful : " Let us labour (let us

strive—endeavour earnestly) to enter into that rest, lest any one fall after the same example of disobedience.” The primal sin which caused the banishment of man from Eden will also debar the people of God from the promised rest. Therefore every power of the soul is to be bent to this one purpose, that God may have pleasure in us, and that we may have days of heaven upon the earth. For the eternal day of heaven is spent in doing his pleasure, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

The two last sections of our chapter (Heb. iv.), viz., verses 12, 13, and verses 14—16, may seem at first not to have a very close connection with the preceding context. But this is far from the fact. We are to labour to enter into this rest, not only lest we fall through disobedience, but because the quick and powerful Word of God, like a sharp two-edged sword, probes so deeply, and discerns the inmost motives of the heart.

When the soul begins to desire this rest, it generally seeks it in outward reformations. He who has been accustomed to give way to impatient or foolish words, or to speak evil of others, watchfully keeps the door of his lips, and these habits are to some extent overcome. The grasping man deals fairly; the hard man forces himself to act kindly; the woman who has loved the adornments of gold and pearls and costly dress, puts on modest apparel; the husband tries to show more of the

grace of Christ to the wife ; the wife, to yield submission to her husband. All such endeavours to cease from our own works are the result of the law of God working in the conscience ; but they do not give the desired rest. On the contrary, the sharp, two-edged Word of God probes to the secret springs of life, and there discovers and reproveth the root of sin. Though gentle words be spoken, the motions of malice are still experienced ; the covetous desire, the thought of foolishness, love of the world—the hidden evil in its myriad forms is not destroyed. Self, the Antichrist, is discovered sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. While thus the sword pierces to the dividing asunder of joint and marrow, and of soul and spirit, and the heart, naked and opened, with its thoughts and intents unsparingly discerned, lies quivering beneath the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, the troubled soul is fiercely tempted to abandon her confession in despair.

Now comes, like a trumpet rallying the fainting forces on the battlefield, the voice of the Spirit in the Word : “ Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” “ Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” “ Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” And with these warning



notes come softer sounds, assuring us of compassion in our weakness, and of grace to help in time of need.

The sharp, two-edged Word of God reduced the soul to self-despair, in order that she might lift her eyes from earth to heaven, from the cruel enemies without and the deceitful foes within, to the Captain of the Lord's host, the Captain of our salvation. Now we know, and not till now, the efficient ministry of our Great High Priest. Now we understand why "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

As a mother lays her babe upon her lap while she extracts the thorn, or administers the medicine rendered needful by her child's disease, so does our Elder Brother deal with us. As the High Priest, with unwearied patience, looked upon the leper, and shut him up for seven days, and again for seven days more, watching for signs of returning health; or with goodness which seemed severity pronounced him utterly unclean; or went forth without the camp to see if the plague were healed in the leper; or, with blood, and oil upon the blood, cleansed him, and pronounced him clean—so, but with a thousand-fold more tenderness, does

He to whom God declared, on the day of his resurrection, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," watch over, restore, and strengthen, those whom He has purchased with his precious blood.

As Noah's dove could find no rest while the waters of judgment covered the earth, so the soul can find no rest so long as the thoughts and intents of the hearts are under the just judgment of the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. But the dove found an olive-leaf, token of victory over death: the waters had assuaged; judgment had done its work; the wages of sin had been paid in death, and above the avenging flood were seen the first-fruits of resurrection. Christ is the olive-leaf. The world has been judged in Him; all God's waves and billows went over Him; and, rising from the dead, the Righteous God declared Him King of Righteousness, and King of Peace. To Him the Comforter points the tried and tested soul, and when her heart is overwhelmed, and she is ready to give up in despair her search for rest, He bids her hold fast her profession: He shows her the Olive-branch of peace—the risen Jesus—the First-born of death—the First-begotten from the dead.

"Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched

with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."



## THE SERVANT AND THE SON.


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“Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.”—JOSHUA I. 1, 2.

“Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house.”—HEB. III. 5, 6.

“The servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”—JOHN VIII. 35, 36.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”—ROM. VIII. 15.

HE keynote of the Book of Joshua is struck in the first sentence. “Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan.” On which Scott truly says, “The Mosaic dispensation was introductory to that of the gospel, and the former must expire before the latter could appear in its glory... Being ‘dead to the law,’ as the ground of our confidence, is necessary to our salvation by Jesus Christ.

These things are typically taught by the death of Moses and the succession of Joshua."

Moses was the lawgiver, and in his own person was a remarkable illustration of the working of the Law. "The law entered that the offence might abound." "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, but once his meekness failed ; he was overcome in his least vulnerable part ; he reviled the people, and smote the rock instead of speaking to it, as God had commanded, and by this one offence forfeited the land, for "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Therefore so long as Moses lived he was a barrier to Israel's possession of the promised inheritance. "Is the Law, then, against the promises of God ? God forbid ! for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded (shut up) all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 21, 22).

The promise to Israel was Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey. In interpreting this type to the spiritual Israel, Canaan is generally made to mean heaven, and the passage through Jordan, the death of the body. But this

cannot be. Israel fought no battles in the wilderness, except the one with Amalek at the commencement, and those with Sihon and Og, at the close, of the forty years. "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What He did in the Red Sea [at the beginning of the forty years] and in the brooks of Arnon [at the end of the forty years]." There were no wars of the Lord between those periods. In the wilderness they wandered, and murmured, and complained; their own unbelief kept them out of the land; and the fact of all the men of war dying in the wilderness is three times used by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament as an ensample and a warning unto us. In the land they fought and conquered. We do not expect to have to begin our warfare after we have departed this life. We do not consider that there is some dire necessity upon us, compelling us to live a life on earth answering to the experience of that generation of Israel "with whom God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." God forbid. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." There was no victory in the wilderness, from the time when, in the first year after they left Egypt, the people accepted the law as a covenant of works, and afterwards refused to go up and possess the land, to the time when, after the lapse of thirty and eight years, they passed over the brook Zered, to possess, on the

east of Jordan, the land of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og, king of Bashan. And observe the reason of their so long sojourn in the wilderness. It was "until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord swore unto them. For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed" (Deut. ii. 14). This cannot be the type, model, pattern, example, of what Christian experience ought to be; and no one will presume to say that it *must*, by some miserable necessity, be something far different from what it *ought* to be.

While in the wilderness, and under law, we wander, but make no real advance. One day we are on the borders of the promised rest, and gain a sight of the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon; but soon we are in the midst of the waste howling wilderness of uncircumcised flesh, and its murmur and complaint, and again find our only comfort in the forgiveness of sins—in singing the song of redemption on the shore of the Red Sea. We must die to live, and Jordan (the river of judgment) must be passed ere we can begin a better life of progress and of victory. The passage of the Red Sea typifies our dying to the world and its fleshly lusts; the passage of Jordan represents our dying to the Law as the way of righteousness.



The promised inheritance of Canaan surely means that rest of soul which is enjoyed by the believer who has reckoned himself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, and not till then, can the promise be received, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 11, 14). Until this inward death has taken place, we are not and cannot be, in the full sense of the word, under grace. The soul just delivered from the bondage of Egypt, sings indeed its song of redemption on the shore of the Red Sea, and sees its enemies destroyed by that very blood which has been the means of its own salvation. But after this comes the law. And the experience, I doubt not, of every soul, more or less, is expressed in the exclamation of Rom. vii. 9 : "I was alive, without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." On the shore of the Red Sea, just ransomed from the iron bondage of the prince of this world, I sang "unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation." But when I came to Sinai, and God made his claim to all my ransomed powers, and bade me love the Lord with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, then sin revived, and I died. Sin, quickened into renewed life by the

commandment, separated between me and God, and I died; for as eternal life is to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, so to be separated from the Father and the Son is death. This ministration of condemnation and death is Moses; and until Moses dies, the land of promise and of grace cannot be entered and enjoyed.

It may be objected that the dispensation of law is past, and that we are living under the dispensation of grace. This is most true. But it is very possible for us to be outwardly under grace, but inwardly under law, and to go back into the bondage which is dispensationally past, just as, on the other hand, the elders of the old dispensation saw the promises of the new dispensation, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and became heirs of the righteousness which is by faith (Heb. xi. 13, 7).

This is what the passage of Jordan represents. Only by our dying to the Law can the Law die to us; and when we have reckoned ourselves by faith in the crucified and risen Saviour dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God, then we have passed over Jordan. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet.

iv. 1, 2). He that is thus armed with the same mind that was in Christ is passed over Jordan, to fight and vanquish enemies in the land of promise and of rest. So long as the flesh is uncrucified, so long Moses, that is the Law, maintains his place; but when Moses dies to us by our becoming dead to the Law by the body of Christ, then our Joshua—that is Jesus—the Captain of our salvation, leads us over Jordan into the land that floweth with milk and honey.


“Moses might lead to Jordan’s tide,  
But there surrenders his command;  
Our Joshua must the waves divide,  
Bring us into the Promised Land.  
Trained by the Law, we see our place  
We gain the inheritance by Grace.”



## “OVER JORDAN.”

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“Moses my servant is dead ; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”—JOSHUA I. 1, 2.

HEN God told Joshua, after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, to “arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel,” there seemed no limitation or condition attached to the gift of the good land. But He immediately adds, “*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.*” “*According to your faith, so shall it be unto you,*” has always been the principle on which God has acted toward his people. “*Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*”

The will of God was that Israel should utterly destroy the nations of Canaan, and possess the

entire land. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms : and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone ; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine ; also his heavens shall drop down dew" (Deut. xxxiii. 26—28).

Truly the difficulties seemed great ; and God did not hide any of them from the people. "Hear, O Israel, thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, a people great and tall, the children of the Anakim, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak?" God foresaw that Israel's great temptation would be to measure the difficulties by themselves, and to judge of their power to dispossess the people of Canaan by their own strength and numbers ; and He therefore adds, "Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is He which goeth over before thee ; as a consuming fire He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before thy face : so shalt thou drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee" (Deut. ix. 1—3).

When they measured themselves against the

men of Anak, they were as grasshoppers before giants ; but giants are no more than babes, and cities walled to heaven are no more than unwalled villages, before the consuming fire, which God had promised to be before them. And yet the mighty overthrow thus to be accomplished was to be reckoned to Israel as though they themselves had done it. The works wrought by faith in God are, by the God of all grace, imputed to the believer, who thus becomes a fellow-worker with God.

But the actual history of Israel sadly contrasts with the promises of God. We read of the mighty victories gained by Joshua, and of his uninterrupted success, with the two exceptions arising from Achan's sin and the Gibeonites' deceit ; but when he had divided the land among the tribes, we are told that Judah drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron ; the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem ; Manasseh fails to drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean ; neither could Ephraim expel the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer ; nor Zebulun the inhabitants of Kitron ; neither Asher those of Accho ; nor Naphtali those of Beth-shemesh ; and the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley.

The land was theirs, for God had given it unto

them ; yet it was only theirs in part, for they had not wholly conquered it. Could Judah say the valley of his possession was really his, while the Canaanites held it with their iron chariots ? Or could Dan, forced into the mountains by the Amorites, say that the valley was his own ?

Just as the God of Abraham blessed his seed for Abraham's sake, and promised with an oath "that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies," so "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."

But as the seed of Abraham, through unbelief and disobedience, were conquered where they should have overcome, so may we fall in the wilderness of unbelief, or fail to drive out our enemies, and to possess indeed the holy land.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself ;" but yet the world is not reconciled to God. He "hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will ;" yet very few of his saved people have anything beyond the most elementary ideas, and these often crude and erroneous, con-



cerning the dispensation of the fulness of times when He will gather together in one all things in Christ. God has "put all things under his feet, and given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church," yet the Church, individually and collectively, has for the most part failed to put her foot upon the neck of all these enemies. The Father hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; but while, like Achan, we covet silver and gold and Babylonish garments, the inheritance cannot be possessed.

If it would have been a fatal deceit to have told the people that they were enjoying all the promises while yet in the wilderness—or to have persuaded them that all the enemies were overcome while yet there remained very much land to be possessed—what shall we say of the Christian teaching which persuades the believer that the moment when he believed in Jesus for the pardon of his sins, he was put into actual and unqualified possession of all those blessings which are ours in Christ, but which become experimentally our own only as we take them one by one by faith?

It was not enough that God gave the land to Israel. He gave it to them that they might conquer it; and thus, by actual conquest, every place that the sole of their foot trod upon became actually theirs. In like manner, it is not enough that the believer should claim all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ as his

"judicially," by virtue of his "position," or "standing." He must set the sole of his foot upon each promise one by one. The land is good, but the enemies are mighty, and must be conquered one by one by faith in God.

The agony in the garden was no fictitious sorrow ; the anguish upon the cross was not imputed without being experienced ; these sorrows were not endured to give us an imputed, while leaving us destitute of an imparted, righteousness ; nor to confer a legal justification upon those who are still fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

When the whole congregation of Israel had assembled at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there, and the land was subdued before them, there remained seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance. Joshua did not then content himself with congratulating them upon their "standing" in the promised land, upon their "position" at Shiloh ; but appealed to them in these stirring words, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you ?" Shall the Christian say that he has all things and abounds, if conscience and experience tell another tale ? It is one thing to claim a thing "judicially," and another to enjoy it experimentally. The doctrine may be maintained that all believers are partakers of the divine nature ; that all who trust in Jesus

are raised up together and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—but the doctrine though true will bring little joy or power if it be *only* held as doctrine. But saints with shining faces, full of the joy of the Lord, say, because those words supply them with the best possible expression of what they inwardly experience—"I feel that I am a partaker of the divine nature"; "I am raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ." And the contrast between the doctrine without the experience, and the doctrine with the experience, is not small.

Through the knowledge of God, his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness; but unless to faith be added virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, the Christian becomes barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For "he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." Like Israel, he forgets the passover and the Red Sea, and goes down for help to the Egypt, from which God, by a stretched-out arm, delivered him. "Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."



## “A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT.”

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“Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger.”—ZEPH. ii. 3.

“Showing *all* meekness to *all* men.”—TITUS iii. 2.

**I**F men had been choosing a captain to lead out of Egypt, through the Wilderness, into the Promised Land, that rough and rude horde of brickmakers who composed the armies of Israel, the qualities they would have considered of prime importance would have been an indomitable spirit and an unbending will. But God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways. “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth.” “The meekness of wisdom” was remarkably exemplified in the way in which he spoke of Israel to God, even when he was displeased at their murmurings, and fainted under the weight of his burden. He did not describe

them as a stiff-necked, stubborn, and rebellious people, but read thus the commission he had received of God, "Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swarest unto their fathers" (Num. xi. 12).

Moses held an official position among men inferior only to that of the Son of God. He was the apostle and redeemer of Israel; the giver of the law; the mediator of the first covenant. "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." He was the prototype of the Great Prophet of Israel. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee." And not in official position only, but in personal character also, was Moses the most prominent forerunner of Christ. The perfect Mediator of the new and everlasting covenant was like the imperfect mediator of the old, decayed, and vanished covenant, in this, that He was "meek and lowly in heart."

When Jesus came in fashion as a man to redeem the world, He emptied himself; what He was by right and title, "in the form of God" and "equal with God," He left above, and came to earth a man to live by faith in God—the Beginner and the Finisher of Faith. "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." The first essential for a life

like this is meekness, for "the meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach his way." And not only as Saviour, but also as King, the Holy Ghost bears witness to the meekness and gentleness of Christ. "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

It is true, indeed, that, like the fine flour of the meat-offering, the innumerable perfections of Jesus were so harmoniously blended together, that none appeared prominent above another; nevertheless, like the glory by which the old painters distinguish the Saviour from all beside, his holy meekness shed a radiant halo around all his other attributes.

Nor is meekness a quality peculiar to God while veiled in human flesh. What the God-man was and is, GOD is. The Son hath revealed the Father. Is the Son meek and lowly? Does Zion behold the Meek One for her King? Then meekness is a quality of the invisible and almighty God. Thus Elijah finds Him, not in the whirlwind, not in the earthquake, not in the fire, but in the still small voice. And thus the Psalmist testifies, "Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation, and thy right hand hath holden me up; and with thy meekness Thou hast multiplied me."

This heavenly virtue lies at the foundation of

every Christian grace, and increases with the growth of every living stone of that building fitly framed together, which groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. The King of Israel preaches to the self-righteous and the wicked, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" but in the language of the prophet He declares, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach *good tidings* unto the *meek*;" while a voice responds from heaven, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a humble and a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." And as it is to the meek that the good tidings are preached—for "only a broken-hearted sinner can receive a crucified Christ"—so also the saint is exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls"—"that ye may grow thereby."

The people of God are, like their Lord, distinguished by this estimable quality: "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: He will beautify the meek with salvation." His people are the meek; He taketh pleasure in them, and He will beautify them with salvation. He contrasts these his people with the wicked: "The Lord lifteth up the meek; He casteth the wicked down to the ground." All who are not lifted



up amongst the meek are cast down amongst the wicked.

They who are beautified with meekness here, shall be beautified with salvation above. Therefore does the once impetuous Peter plead with saints, that their adorning may not be "that outward, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." They do err, not knowing the Scriptures, who read this alone with reference to believing women. The Church holds to Christ the relation of the woman to the man. He is the Bridegroom, and we the bride. All outward and meretricious adorning is worthless in the sight of Him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men; for it is corruptible, like the honey in the goodly flower of grass; and honey, equally with leaven, was forbidden to be offered to the Lord. But the meek and quiet spirit is like the incorruptible frankincense upon the meat-offering, of which the priest was to "take his handful of the fine flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with *all* the frankincense thereof," for it is in the sight of God of great price.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." It is hard to draw

a distinction between the poor in spirit and the meek ; we may safely say they are very near of kin, and heaven and earth are their possession and inheritance. There is only the lake of fire for all beside.

It is not the meekness of the natural man—of which some have apparently much more than others—concerning which the Scriptures speak so highly. It is "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" wrought in the believing soul ; the "lowliness and meekness ;" the "love, patience, and meekness ;" the "humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering ;" the "gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance," which again and again are enumerated as the fruit of the Spirit—not fruits, but fruit, for the fruit of the Spirit is all one in essence, and meekness is at the core.

There is no grace or virtue so scorned in the world, or so slighted in the Church, as this of meekness. Without it, it is impossible to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling ; for where it is wanting, the Spirit is continually grieved, and God is not allowed to work in the heart, to will and to do of his good pleasure. Without meekness there can be no power, for power belongeth unto God, and only the meek yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Without meekness there can be no worship, for only the meek present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, their

reasonable service. Without meekness there can be no real boldness, for fallen nature is a coward from the days of Adam downward, and it is impossible for true courage to exist unless based upon the solid foundation of implicit faith in God. Such homely virtues as kindness to servants, patience to children, submission to parents, respect to the aged, etc., all follow in the train of Christian meekness ; for "the meek *will* He guide in judgment, and the meek *will* He teach his way."

Meekness has two aspects — towards God and towards man ; the latter cannot exist without the former. And, oh, how many divisions in churches, contentions in families, sorrows and heart-burnings in every relation of life, may be traced to the want of a meek spirit towards God and man ! May we not say that the whole Epistle of James, and the exhortations which conclude all the epistles, based upon the doctrine stated at their commencement, are generally and grievously treated with contempt, for want of meekness in those to whom they are written ? Take, for example, that one precept, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." What righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are unpossessed by the children of God, because they are not meek enough to obey this divine direction. What contentment with such things as we have ; what condescending to

men of low estate; what avoidance of foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient; what restoration of others, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted, characterize a spirit truly meek.

We are by nature so impregnated with Satanic pride, that no grace is so difficult of attainment as this of meekness. There is, in this respect, a universal need to confess our faults one to another, and to pray one for another, that we may be healed of the leprosy of pride; and if these lines are, by the Holy Ghost, made a blessing to any soul, the writer asks in return, prayer that he may be clothed with humility, and ornamented with a meek and quiet spirit.



## “WITHOUT THE CAMP.”

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“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”  
—HEB. XIII. 10—14.

**W**HEN an individual Israelite brought his sin-offering, the priest, having offered the inward parts on the altar of burnt-offering, fed on the remainder in the holy place, expressing thereby that God had given it to them to bear the iniquity of the children of Israel. But when the priest himself had sinned, thus bringing guiltiness upon the whole congregation, or when the people had sinned, implicating the priest in their transgression, the body of the sin-offering was consumed without the camp; for when the priest had sinned, either personally or by implication, he was in no position to bear the iniquity of others. This was why Aaron did not eat the

sin-offering when Nadab and Abihu, his sons, had offered strange fire before the Lord, and were destroyed. Moses, clinging to the letter, chides Aaron for not eating ; Aaron, entering into the spirit of the ordinance, forbore to eat. He explained to his brother the inner meaning of the rite, "and when Moses heard that, he was content." (Lev. x.) In the case first named some of the blood was put upon the horns of the brazen altar ; but in the latter it was carried into the holy place, and put upon the horns of the golden altar, the altar of sweet incense, which was before the Lord. When guiltiness was upon all the people, the whole sanctuary of their worship was defiled, and the atoning blood must cleanse even to the holy place.

All have sinned, every mouth has been stopped, and the whole world has become guilty before God ; He hath concluded all under sin that He might have mercy upon all. Therefore, Christ has died. That He might sanctify the people with his own blood, the Great Sin-offering suffered without the gate, and then the Great High Priest entered in once for all into the holiest, having obtained redemption.

Thus far is there comparison with the typical sin-offering ; but here the Holy Ghost establishes a contrast. The priests who served the transitory tabernacle worship of the old economy might not feed upon the bodies of those beasts whose blood

was carried into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin ; but we, the cleansed lepers (compare Lev. xiv. 14—18, with viii. 23), whom the Son sanctified as priests to God by his own blood when He suffered without the gate, are called to know the power of his resurrection, in order that we may be able to bear the fellowship of his sufferings, having been made conformable to his death. We who look for the city which hath the foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle :—“Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, *bearing his reproach.*” To us, who have here no continuing city, but seek one to come, the Lord hath given the Sin-offering for food ; yet not, as of old, “to bear the iniquity of the congregation” (Lev. x. 17), but to bear “the *reproach of Christ.*”

Here are two good and perfect gifts from the Father of lights. To as many as receive his Son, whom the world knows not and whom his kindred according to the flesh despise, He gives the right to become the sons of God ; to the people whom the Son has sanctified with his own blood, He gives the right to bear his reproach. This gift, this privilege, this right, Moses, the faithful servant of his uncontinuing “house,” esteemed greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; and the early followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises departed from the presence



of the council by whom they had been beaten, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

"Without the camp" was also the leper's place. "He is unclean; he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." Jesus took the leper's place when God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. There had been a time when the dew of the King's favour rested upon Him, while all the earth was dry. Now, "it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." When all the people had been judged, and had confessed themselves sinners, and Jesus had undertaken to fulfil all righteousness, the heavens opened, the Spirit like a dove descended and abode upon Him, and the Father's voice declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But when He suffered without the gate, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, there was darkness over all the earth; and in that passover night—"It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations")—while the dew was falling upon all mankind, the Lamb of God was crying, in bitterness of soul, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken ME?"

It is not possible to exaggerate the solemnity of this consideration, that the place of the leper

without the camp, taken by the Holy One, was and is the only spot on earth which God considers clean ; for *there* flowed from the heart of Jesus blood and water, "the double cure" of sin. When Israel worshipped the golden calf, "Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp." The whole camp was full of leprosy, and God took his place outside, where, if the camp were clean, the lepers ought to dwell. Instead of abiding amongst the tents of Israel, He took up the words He had spoken of the leper, (Lev. xiii. 46), "I will dwell alone: without the camp shall My habitation be." "And it came to pass, that every one who sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." It is so still. They must go outside the camp who would hold fellowship with the Father and the Son. It is here the saints have power with God. We must go forth unto Him without the camp, to realize the fulfilment of Jesus' words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." True ambassadors of Christ always bear about in their bodies the marks, yea the dying, of the Lord Jesus ; become a spectacle to angels and to men ; are made the offscouring of all things for Christ's sake.

Without the gate, where Jesus suffered, was not alone outside of Pilate's judgment-hall and of the worldly power, but outside also of the city of Israel's solemnities—outside the temple and its

altar—outside the feasts of the Lord to which He, with all the tribes of the Lord, had theretofore gone up. But now both Jew and Gentile, idolatry and religion, are alike concluded under sin, and, concurring in the murder of the Just One, are condemned together. God appears to be putting this test before his people: "Ye have overcome and judged the worldly world; will ye follow Jesus in his rejection by the religious world? Ye have eschewed the beasts that neither cleave the hoof nor chew the cud; will ye abstain from them that, though they cleave the hoof, chew not the cud?"

While the truth makes free, it also surely brings the cross. It makes a man's foes to be they of his own household. It affects his position in the church, and makes his life, if he be faithful to it, a testimony against those who are less faithful. Those who are with the Lamb without the camp are called, and chosen, and faithful; they sing a new song which none beside can learn; to every one of them is given a white stone, whereon a Name is written which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.

John began to be offended when he found that Jesus made no impression on the rulers of the people, and was only great among the sick and poor; many of his disciples went back and walked no more with Him when He taught them that it is the Spirit that quickeneth, *the flesh profiteth*

*nothing* ; and Peter, careful of his own comfort and warming himself at the fire while Jesus stood bound before Caiaphas the high priest, denied his Lord.

The offence of the cross has not ceased. Paul withstood Peter to the face when he separated himself from the Gentiles, fearing them of the circumcision ; while the other Jews dissembled, and even Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. Much may be sacrificed for the sake of peace, but not the truth of the gospel. How true it is that the fear of man bringeth a snare.



## “GOOD WORKS.”

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“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”—JAS. II. 14—26.



WORKS are the gauge of faith. As much of works, so much of faith; no more, no less. Faith inhales the life of God, and then outbreathes that life in works. If the

breath of works be lacking, the body of faith is dead ; "for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." God, however, not man, is Judge, for man judges according to the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart. A mirror is held to the lips of the unconscious form, and the faintest vapour visible upon the glass indicates that life is not extinct. The sensitive eye and ear of love detect the feeble pulsation undiscernible by others. God had reserved to Himself seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal, when Elijah thought that faith was dead in Israel ; and Jesus knew that Philadelphia had a little strength, though it was manifested not in aggressive action on the world, but in having kept his word and not having denied his name.

And this leads to the remark that the patience with which suffering is borne ; the intercession of a bedridden saint for others ; subjection to the will of God when debarred from active effort—are all true work and labour of love, and shall be so acknowledged and rewarded in the day of Christ. If this were not the case, James would sadly have discouraged those who are sick and helpless, or prisoners whose hands and feet are bound with chains, when he said that "faith without works is dead."

In the counting-house of a manufactory you sometimes see an index whereon the owner reads the pressure of steam in the engine by which the

machinery is worked; so the Judge of all computes in heaven the faith of those whose "prayer and alms have come up for a memorial before God." For faith is shown by works, even as the heat is indicated by the rise or fall of the quicksilver in the thermometer.

Holiness, no less than justification, is wrought by means of faith in Christ; and therefore some who have exhorted unto holiness have been understood to mean that saints are to sit with folded hands, trusting Christ to do everything, while they yield themselves to an inactive and inglorious ease. Nothing can be farther from the truth. As we have ever contended for the reality of repentance, while some have practically cast it to the winds, so do we maintain that the believer must fight, must wrestle, must run, must keep his body under, must mortify his members which are upon the earth, must watch and pray, and diligently read and continually meditate in the Word of God. But this (if it be of faith and not of law—for all these things may be only vain oblations counterfeited by the flesh, as the Pharisee counterfeited prayer) is precisely the life of God in the believer's soul. These, if genuine, are all works which prove the vitality of faith. If they be not of faith, then are they sin. It is Christ who fights in the fighting believer; Christ who wrestles, runs, keeps under the body, and mortifies its members, watches, prays, and meditates in the



Word by day and night. For this is Christian life, and all true Christian life is Christ's own life lived in the believer's soul by faith. As says the Apostle : "For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me* : and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

God is the only worker. He rests in eternal and infinite repose, no less when He "awakes as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine," than when, having torn Ephraim as a lion and as a young lion Judah, He returns unto his place until they acknowledge their offence and seek Him early (Psa. lxxviii. 65 ; Hosea v. 14, 15). And because it is He who works all our works in us (Isa. xxvi. 12), He ordains peace for us while we fight, rest while we work, and joy while we mortify our members and daily die. Under the law they said, "For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "Nay," say we, under the gospel, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

"Let the saints be joyful in glory ; let them sing aloud upon their beds ; let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the

heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord !" Saints fight upon their beds—not beds of slothful ease, but of believing rest. They work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. They yield themselves in faith to Him, that his will may be the ruling power constraining their will by love ; and what He wills in them they do ; yea, their works are the necessary and inevitable issue of that Divine will working in them to will and do of his good pleasure. Thus by works is faith made perfect or complete. It is sheer hypocrisy to assert that we have faith a whit beyond the measure of our works. To the exact extent to which we yield ourselves to God that He may work in us to will and do of his good pleasure, will be the working out with fear and trembling of our own salvation from sin and wrath.

There is a dead faith, and there are dead works. Each may seem perfect in outward form, just as a corpse is as perfect in form as a living and breathing man. Nay, the dead may be beautiful and the living a deformity ; but the living God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Esau, bold and free, a cunning hunter, a man of the field, is pleasant in the eyes of men ; while the

plain man, dwelling in tents, is despised ; but "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Esau is in the eyes of God profane ; he is of the earth earthy. He will save his life at any cost. "Give me of that red, red" (pottage, the colour of the red earth) ; but the man of faith will yield up all, if only he may win the birthright to all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Let us purge ourselves from dead works, which are the counterfeits of the true. Dead works are the works of the flesh, good only in appearance. They are the imitative actings of a dead faith operated upon from without, like the movements of a corpse under the influence of galvanism. But good works are the actions of a believer, within whom is the kingdom of God, who lives in the Spirit and walks in the Spirit. How sweetly the Psalmist describes God's work in men, when God wrought in and by his people, and they gave Him the glory :—

"We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How Thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them ; how Thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them : but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them. Thou art my King, O God : command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies : through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall

my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." (Psa. xlv. 1—8).


God fought all David's battles, yet David was a man of war ; and there is no more painful record in the Book of God than the story of his shameful fall, when, instead of going forth to battle like a king, he tarried still at Jerusalem, and became the servant of sin. Not long before he had desired to build a house for God ; and God had promised, "The Lord will make thee a house—and thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee : thy throne shall be established for ever." But David had now laid aside his armour and given himself up to unwatchful and unprayerful ease ; the tempter came and David fell, and the penalty was soon declared, "Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house." "This is a faithful saying," says Paul to Titus, "and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God be *careful to maintain* good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And good works can only be maintained by diligent and unremitting use of the fundamental means of grace—the Word of God and prayer.



## “PRAYER AND FASTING.”

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“But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat; and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.”—PSA. lxxxi. 11—16.

“HY could not we cast him out?” asked the disciples of their Lord, when they had failed to deliver the lunatic child from the devil which possessed him. And Jesus said, “Because of your *unbelief*; for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” And more emphatically in another Gospel, “This kind *can come forth by nothing* but by prayer and fasting.”

The Lord had sent out his disciples two and two, giving them power over unclean spirits ; and they had gone out and preached that men should repent ; had cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. But while Jesus was on the holy mount, where Peter and James and John were eye-witnesses of his majesty, a man had brought to the other disciples his son, his only child, possessed with a devil, whose malignant power was exhibited with more than ordinary violence. The unhappy father, meeting with the Saviour when He came down from the hill, with the eloquence of overwhelming sorrow pours out his heart to Jesus : "Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit ; and wheresoever he taketh him he teareth him, and bruising him hardly departeth from him ; and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. And I spoke to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not."

The Lord, after rebuking the unbelief at once of the man and of his disciples, says, "Bring him unto Me." And when he saw Him straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed foaming. The compassionate Saviour asks, "How long is it ago since this came unto him ?" and the father answers, "Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him ; but if Thou canst do

anything, have compassion on us and help us." The Lord replies, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." The Lord rebukes the foul spirit in terms of extraordinary emphasis, not only casting him out, but forbidding him ever to return: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose; and the child was cured from that very hour.

We need not dwell upon the inimitable grace with which the Holy Ghost has told this touching story; but it was written for our learning, and He will take these words concerning Jesus and show them to those who desire to know the way of the Lord more perfectly.

Though the faith of the disciples had triumphed over many unclean spirits, it failed before the power of the devil in this fearful case; and their unbelief not only dishonoured the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth by rendering it powerless, but also created doubt in the mind of the father, whether in such a case as this even the Lord Himself had power to do anything. They ask Him privately why they, who had succeeded in



other conflicts, were impotent in this ; and while He rebukes their unbelief, He tells them that the faith necessary for such mighty works as these can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.

No good work can be wrought by man except through faith in God : and according to the faith so shall it be done. But faith increases in proportion as the body is kept in subjection ; as the vessel is possessed in sanctification and honour ; as every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. At a later period the disciples prayed, "Lord, increase our faith." The parable in which the Master replied suggests that there was a hindrance to the development of their faith in the self-complacent spirit engendered by their obedience and their works ; and He concludes by saying, "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him ? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants ; we have done those things which it was our duty to do " (see Luke xvii. 5-10)—warning them thus gently and indirectly of the self-exalting spirit of anti-christ, which was already in their midst, yea, working already in their hearts.

Protestantism, in its zeal for the glorious foundation doctrine of justification by faith, has somewhat overleaped itself, and has almost abjured some

commandments of God, because they have been made of none effect by Popish observances and traditions of men. Thus, for example, in considering the words of St. Paul, "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway"—so much care is taken to limit the meaning of the term "cast-away," that in our jealousy for the believer's final security we are in danger of overlooking the real force of the apostle's declaration.

Paul kept his body under : " I protest that I die daily," "bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus." He warred a good warfare with wicked spirits in heavenly places. He abstained from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. To speak after the manner of men, he had, for the sake of Jesus, fought with beasts at Ephesus. There men, full of brutal fury, opposed the truth, and all with one voice, about the space of two hours, cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The makers of silver shrines for the heathen goddess had been ready to tear him in pieces, because he taught that they were no gods which were made with hands, whereby not only this their craft was in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipped. Paul joyfully suffered thus because

there is a resurrection in which we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; and he would not there be found without full proof of his ministry ; his children in the faith should be his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. But if the dead rise not, what advantageth it him that he has fought with beasts at Ephesus, or abstained from fleshly lusts which war against the soul ? " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

In our own day many devils have been cast out, and seven times seventy disciples have returned again with joy, saying, " Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." And in such an hour Jesus has again rejoiced in spirit, and said, " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." But the serpents and scorpions of the pit are not yet all trodden under foot. Foul spirits, deaf and dumb, retain their dreadful hold of men. Deaf, they do not hear the joyful sound of gospel grace, that at the cross of Jesus mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other : dumb, their mouths make no confession to salvation ; for faith cometh by hearing, and they have not heard.

Many a stricken heart still cries, " I brought

him to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not ;" and disciples, foiled in public, having failed to realize the promise, "Greater works than these shall ye do," go in private to their Lord, and ask, "Why could not we cast him out?" And still the doctrine drops from heaven as the rain, and like the dew distils upon the herb: "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." And when the prayer is made, "Lord increase our faith;" the same answer is given as of old: "The little living seed of faith, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds and to the plucking up of deeply-rooted trees, is choked and hindered by the weeds of pride, and love of praise, and fear of man. Be ye, therefore, followers of my fellow-workers as they follow Christ, in all things approving yourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and true; as unknown, and well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as

poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

All this is surely included in the words of Jesus, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." He does not mean a pharisaic abstinence from food, unassociated with prayer to God ; but he does mean *that* (whatever it be) by which the body is brought under and kept in subjection : that running not uncertainly, that fighting which is not a mere beating of the air, whereby sin is not suffered to reign in this mortal body, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof. Nor is abstinence from food, as well as from other lawful and even necessary things, an unimportant auxiliary in this battle with self, to which the soldiers of Jesus Christ are called, and negligence in which inevitably leads to a lack of power both with God and man. For self-indulgence and self-pleasing are utterly incompatible with a life of faith in the power of the Holy Ghost.

"There is woe befallen us by the very circumstance of our being on this earth, which is under a curse, even if we ourselves were holy. For it is not a holy place—the Lord's curse has been spread over it. There must be blessing on our dwellings and on our possessions, if we are to possess true peace. But there is a secret tendency in all earthly things, at present, to provoke indulgence in sin, as if a secret poison were pervading

all nature. Hence, even our meat and drink so draw down the soul, that we need to fast, if we would be quite free from the influence of even lawful things."

Unhappily, it is no rare sight to see "servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." Desires of the flesh and of the mind have usurped dominion over the man, and the thirstings of the soul for God, the living God, are kept in subjection to the carnal will. This is less the exception than the rule. He must not "fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind" who aspires to the greatness of ruling his spirit. God's dearly beloved strangers and sojourners in an evil world, by abstinence must starve the fleshly lusts which war against the soul, until they fade away in their close places. And to them who are thus faithful to their high and heavenly calling will God give to sing a song of triumph rare in these hasteful days: "Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. I have pursued mine enemies and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the mire of the street."

Says the sweet yet often sad singer of the Old Covenant, "For thy sake we are killed all the

day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "Nay," responds the apostle of the New, "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

He whose spirit lives under the covenant of works will think of fasting as a hard requirement ; and either reject it or account it meritorious. But he who lives in the power of the covenant of grace will see that the denial of self, the plucking out of right eyes and cutting off of right hands, that cause us to offend, is a weapon mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds in our hearts, and effectual in bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. May God by his Spirit help us to walk as Jesus walked, for the honour of his name.





## THE WORDS OF GOD.

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“Every word of God is purified—as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”—PROV. xxx. 5; Ps. xii. 6.

“And they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.”—EZEK. i. 16.



HERE lived a man of whom a poet said—

“A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more.”

There lives a man, a master in Israel—a bishop—  
*ἐπίσκοπος*—an overseer—a *seer*!—to whom the Bible is a printed book, and nothing more.

The poet, with a deeper insight, looks upon the flower and sings—

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

And the man of faith, seeing deeper still, gives God the glory—

“In wisdom hast Thou made them all.”

A pebble on the shore may become the play-

thing of a child : the rock quarried from the mountain may be made the foundation of a city ; yet to the child and to the builder the secret of the pebble and the rock lies unrevealed, until the geologist strikes the pebble with his hammer, and lays bare the beautiful forms within ; or reads the story of prehuman ages in the granite stone.

Those who have not come, like the Greeks of old, desiring to see Jesus, will never know his beauty ; and those who, like the blinded bishop, have hung a veil of human wisdom upon their hearts, will never read “ the testimony of the rocks ” of truth, which compose our Holy Bible. But even those who rightly use its pebbles and its rocks may, like the child and like the builder, fail to fathom “ the deep that lieth under,” or to obtain the hidden treasures of the Word of God.

Melchizedek was King of Salem and Priest of the Most High God, and nothing more, till Paul, as with a geologist’s hammer, split the word in two, and found engraven there the name of the Son of God—the New Name of the risen Jesus, “ first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace.”

Beneath the injunction of Moses’ law, “ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn,” the same apostle was taught to see the mind of God concerning those who labour in the gospel. “ Doth God take care for oxen ; or saith He it

altogether for our sakes ? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written ; that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope."

In like manner we may learn to draw our illustrations from Moses' law, and to find the principles, dogmatically asserted in the New Testament, enforced by legal directions and by historical facts, under the Old Covenant.

For example : Paul tells the Corinthians that the woman who is not bound to a husband is "at liberty to be married to whom she will : *only in the Lord*" (1 Cor. vii. 39). The reason for this is given in the second epistle (vi. 14, 15), "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever ? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ?"

How clearly were these principles embodied in Moses' law ; introduced, too, with a special and solemn note of warning. "Ye shall keep my statutes ! Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind ; thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed ; neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee" (Lev. xix. 19).

And in Deuteronomy (the second law—the

repetition of the law in the hearing of the children of those to whom the law had first been given, and whose carcasses had fallen in the wilderness) this is emphatically repeated: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of linen and woollen together."

Why all this emphasis? why repeat the principle under so many forms? In mercy to his people, because the loving Father would not have his children yoked together with those with whom they could have no fellowship; He would not have them self-condemned to a life-long endeavour to effect an impossibility; to establish a communion between light and darkness; a concord between Christ and Belial; an agreement of the temple of God with idols.

The only case in which we can suppose a difficulty as to such a union would be, where the conversion of one party takes place after a definite and absolute engagement has been formed. The question would then arise, Is the believer required, or at liberty, to break his contract? The Book again would help him in such a case, if not in the way of express statement, yet by the recorded conduct of those who were placed in kindred circumstances. During the forty years in the

wilderness a man blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed ; and they put him in ward that the mind of the Lord might be showed them. Again, when they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath, they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. In both cases God gave them direction. Wait on God and He will reveal his mind. We have his immutable promise, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" or only of man. If, in the case we have supposed, the believer waits on the Lord, willing to do his will, He will save the loved one ; or make the antipathy between light and darkness so manifest that the unbeliever will of his own accord depart ; or in some other way He will make a plain path for his obedient child. "He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God."

The Christian into whose ears that word of Jesus has deeply sunk, "Have faith in God," will need to search deeply into the Word ; for if he aspires to walk upon that narrow path which no fowl knoweth and which the vulture's eye hath not seen, he will not find, without much of the Word of God and prayer, the help and counsel he continually requires. The Spirit will drive him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil ; not that he may become his prey, but that he may

overcome him with, "It is written—it is written again."

Such a one will leave himself undefended and unprotected by many human expedencies which others even of the elect adopt, and will rest secure in faith, trusting in the living God. And, therefore, with peculiar enjoyment, he will dwell upon such a provision as that by which the redemption of a house in an unwalled village was secured to its possessor at the year of jubilee; while the house in a walled city should not revert to its original owner, if he failed to redeem it within a year after it was sold. In the land of Canaan, where all the males went up three times a year to appear before Jehovah, the God of Israel, it was very natural that they should wish to leave their wives and children securely fenced within walled cities. They were promised indeed that, as the terror of God had been upon the cities that were round about their fathers, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 5), so "neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year" (Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24); but it was hard to sense and sight to leave their loved ones in the houses of the villages which had no wall round about them, and which were counted as the fields of the country (Lev. xxv.). Nevertheless, while He did not forbid the fenced cities, God set a special mark of his approval upon the man, poor

in this world, but rich in faith, who had his house in the unwalled village, and trusted Him to hide beneath the shadow of his wings the women and the children, left otherwise defenceless three times a year.

It has sometimes occurred to us, while we have listened to evangelists illustrating the gospel by anecdote after anecdote, that, if they sought for illustrations in the Word of God which endureth for ever, they would become as scribes instructed into the kingdom, bringing forth out of their treasury things new and old. And if, at the moment, less effect were produced than by the relation of the latest narrative, yet God would honour his own Word, and the illustrations themselves would be not as mere scaffolding, of no value when the building is completed, but themselves an integral part of the everlasting gospel which we preach.

For wherefore are the Old Testament and the four Gospels so rich in narrative, if not to illustrate the doctrine of the cross? and when did an audience weary of the adaptation of these ancient stories, to the life and death, resurrection and ascension, of Jesus Christ of Nazareth?

It is the fashion, in this material and unmeditative age, to rail against "spiritualizing" Scripture, as if what Jesus said of his own words did not apply to all the words of God, "The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*."



Not, indeed, that we are at liberty to exercise our fancy on the Word of God. A man might dig in the earth all his life and he would never find a nugget or a diamond which had not been set there by God who made the worlds. So neither can any one bring up a truth, or the illustration of a truth, from "the deep that lieth under" the letter of the Word, that was not in the mind of the Spirit when He moved the holy men of old by whom the Word was written. There is in fact no such thing as "spiritualizing Scripture." To fasten our own crude crotchets upon the words of God, and by separating them from their context to make them express what they do not mean, is certainly very far from "spiritualizing" them. And, on the other hand, to discern, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the inward thought beneath the letter of the word ; the ways of God beneath his outward acts ; the portraiture of Christ beneath the histories of failing saints of old : is not to "spiritualize Scripture," but to be taught of God.

Just as the body is to the spirit of a man : so is the letter of Scripture to the spirit and the life which quicken it. And just as the body of a man makes manifest the will of his spirit : so does the letter of the written Word make manifest the will of the Living Word. The idea, therefore, that the spirit of Scripture can be at variance with its letter, is fraught with danger ; and any study of

the spirit of the Word which leads to conclusions incapable of proof by "It is written—it is written again," is worse than "a weariness to the flesh" (Eccles. xii. 12); it would pulverize the Bible into useless dust, and rarefy it into an atmosphere too thin for the sustenance of spiritual life. For our vision has not yet attained to such perfection as to trace the way of the Spirit. The mystery of life, of the substance made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth (Eccles. xi. 5; Ps. cxxxix. 15), is known to God alone. But in his wisdom and kindness He has given in his Word a highway wherein the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err; and has made it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Nevertheless, just as out of the earth not only cometh bread, but under it is turned up as it were fire; the stones of it are the place of sapphires, and it hath dust of gold: so, while upon the surface of the Word is found the bread of life, there are treasures of Wisdom hid in its sands; and "if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God."



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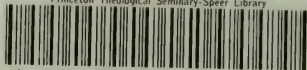
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